THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

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JOSEPH FORT NEWTON, D.D., LL.D.

THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

and Other Sermons

BY

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON, D.D., LL.D.

Author of "Preaching in London," "The Sword of the Spirit," "The Builders," etc.

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TO MY SON

JOSEPH EMERSON NEWTON

I inscribe a Book of Faith,
with admiration and
affection

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IN THE VESTRY

The sermons here gathered together are fruits of the years following the World War—dark, troubled, and confused—when the earth has been like the sea in the vision of the prophet: "There is sorrow on the sea—it cannot be still." They were preached in the course of a busy ministry in New York and Philadelphia, some of them serving in a wider ministry in colleges and universities, such as Harvard, Chicago, Columbia, to name no others; and they here bear their testimony to the truth as the preacher sees it, feels it, and knows it in his heart.

Such unity as these pages have is to be found in the faith which they seek to interpret and expound; a faith finding its center and circumference in Christ, in whom the character of God, the meaning of life, and the prophecy of the soul become incandescent in a vision so ineffably lovely that the words of the preacher are but stammering beggars about a throne. If no echo of the angry debates which have agitated the churches is heard in these sermons, it is because the preacher has no interest in such issues, deeming them in nowise relevant to the actual issues of our age.

Frankly, he holds that the future of humanity, if

it is to be happy and triumphant, lies in the realization of God by the practice of brotherhood, in the faith and fellowship of Christ, in whose service the spirit of science, the democratic principle, and an emancipated spiritual evangel must join in the building of a Beloved Community on earth, uniting races, sects and classes in loyalty to the Common Good; and to that vision he fain would give "the last full measure of devotion."

J. F. N.

THE MEMORIAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL,
OVERBROOK, PHILADELPHIA.

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GOD

PRAYER

Eternal Spirit, as flowers turn their faces to the sun, as rivers seek their freedom in the sea, so our hearts turn to Thee in the ancient adoring habit of our race. Breathe upon us by Thy Holy Spirit, that in the warmth of Thy love our minds may open to wisdom and beauty and the clear vision of Thy truth. Brood over our hearts, that our thoughts, our acts, our lives, may move in kindness and patient obedience to the Will of Christ. Make this day holy with Thy presence, and bright in the fellowship of the truth that makes all other truth true.

Eternal Love, enter into our being and possess us; manifest Thyself to us as our Father and Redeemer. Show us that Thou hast need of our little lives to fulfil Thy purpose of righteousness, even as we need Thee to realize the fullness of life. Make our fairest vision of mercy and truth, of love and justice, so real, so commanding, that all that is within us shall rise up and follow it. Endue us with power, with the insight to read Thy word in the facts and events of our day, and the courage to obey it, following even where we cannot see the way.

Eternal Goodness, grant us to walk before Thee in the glory of a lighted mind, serving our fellows with hands skillful and love-anointed. Dwell within us with the spirit of power and the deep peace of a triumphant hope, then we shall serve Thee in fruitfulness and joy. And when the day is done, and our work is ended, and the night falls, may the dimness of our evening be the dawn of Thy eternal morning. In His name, Amen.

GOD

"One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. 4:6.

THOSE words strike the key-note of the Bible from the song of the morning stars of creation to the anthems of the Apocalypse. God is the motif of its music and the master light of its vision. It differs from other books not in the facts which it records, but in the light in which those facts are read. Here, in this spacious Book, are all the old eternal human realities, but they are seen always as they are related to God and man and their eternal life together. Love and death, joy and sorrow, all that makes our human life, is shown against the background of Eternity, as the light of God falls over the fleeting human pageant. God in the beginning, God the end, God over all, through all, in all, such is the all-transfiguring vision of the Bible; and that is why it is not simply the literature of a people which were of old, but the Book of the Presence.

Herein the mother-book of our religion is true alike to the sanities and sanctities of life, bringing freedom to the mind and solace to the heart. The Bible does not argue about God; it beholds Him in the ongoing of nature, in the unfolding of history,

and in the yearning heart of man. Its writers were not logicians, but seers. Its insight is an intuition in accordance with right reason, an experience wrung from the hard facts of life, a perception of the Truth without which the universe is an orphanage and humanity a waif on the streets of Time. In a sense unique and overwhelming it is a book, not about God, but a book of God. Even in its driest chronicles one feels the nearness of God, as David heard Him moving in the rustle of the mulberry tree. In the "forest of the Psalms," along the dreamy ways of prophecy, in Gospel and Epistle, God is the sovereign reality, the companion of journeying generations, the atmosphere of the life of man and his everlasting hope. When He is near the hills leap for joy and the trees clap their hands; when He is felt to be far away the music falls to a lower octave. The Bible is like the man in the Faber poem who walked reverently and joyfully,

> As if he found some jubilee in thinking;
> For his one thought was God,
> In that one thought he abode,
> Forever in that thought more deeply sinking.

God over all, transcendent and triumphant—that is the faith of the Bible, and that is the faith we need for mental sanity no less than for moral sanitation; it sets us free to think as fast and as far as the mind can go. As Voltaire said, if there were no God it would be necessary to invent one, because

He is needful for the healthy and happy working of the human mind. Such is the fatality of thought. Men seek to be, seem to be, atheists, but the wildest flight of thought is haunted by the presence of God. Rarely, if ever, has atheism been a reasoned theory; in the great minds it is nearly always a revolt against unworthy views of God. Lucretius, who "denied so divinely the Divine," sought refuge from a chaos of capricious gods in the stately order of the Nature of Things. As to such gods we, too, are atheists. The same was true of Socrates, whose thought of God was so far in advance of the men of his time that he was held to be an unbeliever. The agnosticism of the last generation—when sincere, and not a mere labor-saving device to escape the toil of high thinking—was a protest against an irreverent piety. As Arnold said, "We, too, would say God, if the moment we said God you would not pretend that you know all about Him." It was talking of God as though He were a man in the next room that offended refined minds and drove them to silence.

God is the meaning of the universe, at once its cohesion and its coherence, the reason for its relentless integrity, its insistent goodness, and its ultimately victorious genius of love. Here is a faith equal to the dark mood which hovers over so many minds in our day, deepened by the inconceivable tragedy of the World War, in which brute facts seemed to beat down high faith. It is the mood of the Conrad stories in which good and bad alike sink

into a "vast Indifference"; the mood which beshadows the pages of Hardy—whose pessimism, even if mitigated by pity, is as bitter as the salt sea and as black as the hour before dawn; the mood of the glittering essay of Bertrand Russell on the worship of a free man which, he says, must be offered in a universe alien to our ideals, at an altar founded upon "a hard, unyielding despair." But surely Meredith was wiser in that he was able to reconcile not only light and shadow, but crabbed age and joyous youth, flinging across dividing gulfs a network of sympathies, and making the discovery, one of the happiest ever made, that

> "Wits and passions join
> To rear the temple of the credible God."

Neither wits nor passions, nor youth nor age, alone, is able to build the Home of the Soul. The total experience of God, age-long and aspiring, is in fact the sum of many moods, many insights, many doubts and affirmations, and through them all we may arrive, if not at comprehension, at least at the confidence of a saving faith.

For God is not only over all, but through all, uniting humanity in a great solidarity with Himself, and if we are to know Him at all we must know Him together. No man can find God for another, and no man can find Him alone. He is revealed only in fellowship, and this truth we need to know in a day when the brotherhood of the world is

broken, and each people seems to be seeking its own ends. At no time in history has man felt more keenly the need of some cementing spirit, some uniting passion, some federating principle, than he feels it to-day. The hoops of the world have been broken, and the barrel is collapsed. God is the solidarity of humanity, as He is its salvation, and it is idle to trust to anything else or less to hold the world together. Not pressure from without, but a spirit within—running like fire from heart to heart, from land to land—will keep civilization from falling to pieces. No legerdemain of legislative machinery can do it. The higher, more harmonious life has God, and not merely our little selves, for its center, and only as we are sons of one God and Father of all may we hope to find an effective unity, amity, and fraternity among men and nations.

At first, no doubt, all this may seem vague, if not hopeless; but we have to remember that God is not simply over all, and through all—the mystic tie uniting humanity—but that He is in us all. Yes, here in this little, infinite human heart God has a home, and His footstep may be heard in the cool of the day. Man is neither an alien nor an exotic upon the earth, as Hardy and Russell seem to think. He is a child of nature, and if he is of her dust she is of his spirit. There is indeed an undying fire in the soul of man. Many waters can not quench it, many winds can not blow it out. There is a heart of fire in the universe, and the flash and glow of

fellowship between God and the soul is life, power, religion! By this we know that righteousness is not merely earthly, nor love provincial, but that the human soul is eternal as the moral order that lives in it. There is, besides, the story of spiritual heroism and the history of human love, rising through a holy apostolic succession of father-mother hearts to Jesus, the supreme Lover, whose love transcends us as the tragic but triumphant harmonies of the orchestral symphony transcend the plaintive melody of the folk-song from which their theme is taken. What must the heart of the universe be that bloomed in the life, the soul, the character of Christ? Here, at last, we attain to faith in "the credible God," whom we can trust and love, and whose love, in return, satisfies our mortal needs and our immortal longings.

One God and Father of all—there is the truth that shines through the tumult and shadow of the world, and lets us see into the heart of things. And this truth, which is the first truth and the last, we know by what is true and everlasting in ourselves. Once a man told me how he heard Joseph Parker repeat the parable of the Prodigal Son in the pulpit of the City Temple. Without giving out chapter or verse he began, with that voice so like an organ, "A certain man had two sons"; and when he had finished he paused, and said: "Ah, I saw you as you left your home this morning. There was a tap at the window in the nursery, and a little face and a waving hand; and as your hand was

on the gate you looked up and saw the face of your little son. Yes, I saw you, and God saw you too, and there was joy in heaven because the love in your heart for that little boy was a faint reflection of the love of the Heavenly Father for you and me." It was so simply done, and with such sudden sweet surprise, bringing the highest truth to the warm human heart, that many heads were bowed, as when a wind blows softly over a field of ripened grain.

Here we come upon the secret of Jesus, in whom nothing is more amazing to me than the absence from his mind of that sense of the mysterious and baffling which so haunts all superior minds. Perhaps, for the unthinking, all things are plain, and they may have ready answers for all riddles. But all great minds have been beset by questions that grow harder to answer the longer they are pondered, and the only way to dispose of them at last is to leave them, as Job did, with God. With Jesus it was different. His bright eyes saw the tragedy of the world, his ears heard the turbid ebb and flow of human misery. But these things were not problems to him. He does not stop to discuss such questions, even when asked to do so. They cause no hesitation; they impart no tone of doubt to his words; they induce no brooding. No, with Jesus there was only one question: Is God a Father? If He is, all vexing issues as to justice, destiny, and the like disappear like mist in the morning after the fears of the night. As in a large family whose

affairs have come into confusion, and have given rise to seeming inequity, the one question is, What is the character of the father? so Jesus asked the ultimate question and found the answer to all the issues of life.

Jesus rested his life upon faith in God the Father, and he was sure that what may be dim now will be made clear in the end. For us even this faith that God is the Father is beset by many difficulties, but he seems not to be aware of it, because his faith rested not upon logic, but upon life. No faith has ever been so terribly tested as the faith of Jesus. In the Garden of Sorrow he prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass," but that prayer was not answered. None the less he drank the cup to the dregs without losing faith in the Father by whose will it was pressed to his lips. At last, at the end of the ordeal of the Cross—after that lonely cry as of one forsaken of God—he returned to the little prayer at eventide which his mother had taught him as a boy: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." He had faced the worst and found the best, becoming thereby our Leader and Redeemer; and if we let him have his way with our unquiet hearts he will lead us to the truth most worth knowing: that God is near, not far, within as well as without, in the heart of the world, in the soul of man, in the life of each, and still more in the life of all.

God is not a dream, or a guess, or a shadow cast upon the curtain of our hopes and fears. He is the

meaning of the universe and the hope of humanity, and to know Him, as Dante said, is to learn how to make our lives eternal. We do not want dogma; we want the living God. He is "the love that moves the sun and all the stars," but He is here in our hearts, a light, a fire, a love, a hope. Faith in Him is more than a creed; it is an act, an adventure, an achievement of the moral will dedicating our utmost to the highest. This is not a matter that can wait. Duty does not wait, nor temptation, nor sorrow, and death does not tarry for long. "I find great comfort in God," said Lowell in his last days; but he found it because he had all his life kept God in his thoughts, and was thus not alone in the hour of his loneliness. Wisdom lay with that man of old who was a barefooted cook in a kitchen, his life a long drudgery, but also a habit, an art, a guide in the "Practice of the Presence of God." Deep and wise was the word of Emerson—a friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit—in lines that came from a pure heart:

O Friend, my bosom said,
Through Thee alone the sky is arched,
Through Thee the rose is red;
All things through Thee take nobler form,
And look beyond the earth.

Me, too, Thy nobleness has taught
To master my despair;
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through Thy friendship fair.

GOD IN PRISON

PRAYER

Eternal Father, who art the inspirer of prayer and its answer, unite our hearts in the mystic communion of worship. Make our minds sanctuaries of Thy light and Thy truth; touch our aloofness that we may be joined in the joy of fellowship and the beauty of holiness. Here may we find healing for the past and help for the future, refuge from foreboding and strength for each newborn duty. Let not the hardness of the world harden our hearts, lest the vision fade and we lose our way in the dark.

Lead us to Thy holy hill, whence we may see afar Thy wise purpose working in mysterious ways through human pain and tragedy to divine ends. Show us that Thy weakness is stronger than our strength, and that Thy kingdom is slowly emerging out of the welter of passion and confusion in which we labor. Train us, O Lord, in humility of spirit, and grant us the moral dignity and spiritual liberty begotten of simple trust in Thee and faithful service of our fellow souls.

Hear our common prayer for all who are beshadowed by sorrow, tormented by temptation, or baffled by perplexity. O Thou Solver of human problems, Thou Comforter of all who mourn, may our helplessness be Thy opportunity and our deep need Thy open door. Lord, we ask not for escape but for inspiration, not that our burdens be lifted, but that we may be made strong to bear them. Reverently we wait upon Thee—move upon our spirits like a soft wind from a sunnier land. In His name, Amen.

GOD IN PRISON

"He delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the hand of the enemy." Psalm 78:61.

THESE words form a stanza in a patriotic Psalm in which the singer reviews the history of his nation and how God dealt with it in days of old. The text brings us to the time of the old priest Eli and his two wicked sons, Hophni and Phineas, under whom the national faith suffered decline. There was war—always it was war in that antique world—and the army of Israel was in sore straits, having been driven back by the enemy. So it was decided to go to Shiloh and fetch into camp the Ark of the Covenant—an oblong box made by Moses to be a symbol of the presence of God, who dwelt between the sculptured cherubim upon the lid—in the hope of reviving the courage of the people by enlisting the honor of God on the side of their victory. The Ark was brought, and the battle took place, but the result was utter disaster in which the Ark was captured by the enemy. Hophni and Phineas were slain, and when the news was brought to Eli the old man fell back dead. Hence the words of the text, in which, as so often in the Bible, the writer struck a flash of insight which revealed far more than he himself discerned.

Let this scene from a battle long gone be a parable, if nothing more, of the process by which men are groping their way toward an interpretation of God in the experience of our time; a process brought to a crisis by the war, but not created by it. Only those who have kept pace with the deeper movements of the modern mind can realize how radical and profound has been the revolution wrought in its conception of God. For more than a decade our ideas of God have been in confusion, and when the fountain springs of faith are muddy the stream of life is troubled and uncertain. For our thought of God is fundamental. It is the fact by which we interpret all other facts. It decides our standard of ethics; it determines our view of man; it discloses the meaning of history. When for any reason our thought of God suffers defeat or eclipse, we are left to fight a dim battle in a doubtful land, having nothing to supply an ultimate sanction to our ethic or to exert a modifying influence upon the ideas and policies round which the life of society revolves. Some final reference the human mind must have if "the three terms of thought"—the World, Self, God—are not to fall asunder and plunge us into pessimism.

Back of the war, beneath the tragic unrest of our day, one detects a haunting uncertainty not as to the reality of God, but as to His nature, His purpose, and His method of dealing with man. Slowly, in the midst of tumult and agitation of spirit, we are arriving at a more satisfying thought of God with which to confront the facts of sin, pain, and death.

The most significant fact in the faith of our time is the discovery of "the weakness of God," to use the phrase of St. Paul, a conception which, if rightly interpreted, is not only new but true. For years it has been increasingly difficult for men to conceive of God as self-centered, self-involved, dwelling in static bliss, still less to interpret Omnipotence in terms "of the tawdry happenings of regal pomp and physical force," or as arbitrary, irresponsible power. Indeed, the vision of a God who can do anything, regardless of man, has disappeared, giving way to a profounder thought of God which not only makes Him more real, but brings Him nearer to us. To-day God is thought of as finite as well as infinite, limited not only by His own character, but also by His purpose in the human enterprise, His action, in the human world, being conditioned by the character and development of man. If Tennyson could say, speaking of prayer,

> "For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by chains of gold about the feet of God,"

we have learned that it is just as true to say that God is bound by gold chains about the wayward, wandering feet of man.

When a deeper word of truth is won from the mystery of the world it is the poets, the artists, the free and adventurous minds, who are the first to hear and proclaim it. The theologians arrive later, their function being not so much to discover truth

as to relate it to other truth and set it forth in an order of ideas. Thus everywhere in the poetry and fiction of recent years we have been hearing of a finite, limited, struggling God—notably in *Jean Christophe,* by Romain Rolland, the greatest novel of our generation—with much talk about "an unfinished God still in the making," whom we somehow, by heroic moral enterprise, help to liberate, if not to create. For example, in the last thrilling chapter of *The Great Hunger,* by Bojer, we read: "Therefore I went out and sowed corn in my enemy's field, that God might exist . . . So marvelous art thou, O spirit of man. Thou dost reap death, and in return thou sowest the dream of everlasting life. In revenge for thine evil fate thou dost fill the universe with an all-loving God. . . . The stricken mother had risen from the ocean of her suffering that here, in the daybreak, she might take her share in the creating of God." There is a sense, as we shall see, in which we may speak of the growth, or at least the increase, of God; but here the story-teller leaves us with the feeling that it is man who makes God rather than God who makes man.

Always it is so; when truth is seen anew it takes shapes fantastic, and often inverted, but it is still the truth if we have eyes to see it. Shaw and Wells, the two men who more than any others have won the ear of the world in our time, both see the truth of the finiteness of God out of its context, the deep difference between them being that Shaw holds the

triumph of God in the world to be questionable, while Wells sees it to be inevitable. Shaw, who loves to shock us with his cleverness, talks glibly of a God who undertook to make a world but, not knowing His own mind, got muddled, and needs the help of man to save Him from defeat. In *God, the Invisible King,* Wells tells us how he discovered a gracious Comrade God who is love, joy, courage, generosity, beauty, fighting for us and with us against the evil within and the confusion without—he was surprised when I told him that he had found what the Bible means by the Holy Spirit. But alas, above this happy God of the heart there hovers a Veiled Being, dim, aloof, unknown—whether good, evil, or indifferent, we can not learn—to which God and man must alike bow. At first it seems to be only a camouflaged atheism, as if the universe were a Frankenstein monster which God did not create and is unable to control. But that is only seeming. It is in reality a protest of the human heart against a God who lives remote from human struggle, what William James meant when he said that God is not a gentleman with gloved hands disdaining the dust and dirt of the world, but is involved in our agony no less than our aspiration—history being His story as well as ours.

Yes, in the human world God is limited, not by any unknown, awful Fate to which He must bow, but by the fact no less than by the purpose of creation. He limits Himself to make room for man, giving man a little province within His eternal provi-

dence that he may have a real life of his own, fetters Himself that man may be free. It is this seeming weakness and withdrawal of God that makes the glory and pathos of human life. Nor could it be otherwise if, as Keats said, this world is a vale not of tears but of soul-making. As we can only lead our sons so far—much as we should love to go with them all the way—so God must hide Himself from us that we may live our own life, and in seeking Him find ourselves. Else man would have no real moral character, no authentic spiritual achievement. Thus, alike by His nature and His eternal purpose, God has made Himself a prisoner in the House of Man. Once men thought of God as able any moment to withdraw from an obstinate nation or an inhospitable heart, but Hosea taught a deeper truth —"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" He could not do it without denying His nature and defeating His own ends. Involved not only in our origin, but equally in our development and destiny, God can not cast us off, can not let us go. What love can not do God can not do. Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, finding its perfection in losing its life to save others, in dying to live. Because God is love He is bound to us, as we are bound to Him, forever, and in the long last He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

While, as I have said, this mighty truth was forming in the minds of men before the war, it was the world-tragedy that made it first terrifying and then

illuminating. Early in the conflict many were asking why God should allow such a calamity to befall humanity, and why, having allowed it, He did not stop it; but those questions were soon hushed. Slowly it dawned upon men that God could not prevent or stop the war, and that it would do no good if He did. No problem would be solved, no root of war removed. It was better for man to learn by tragedy, if in no other way—by his hide, if not by his head—that he was made for fraternity, and that God cares more for a brother than for His own glory. Not only did men see that the war was due to human improvidence and stupidity, but perhaps its most deeply felt religious truth was that God, instead of standing outside and looking on, actually revealed Himself anew in the struggle—in the courage of men, in the loyalty of women, in the pity of little children on both sides—Himself more wounded than any man or nation. Said a wounded British officer in a hospital:

"What I want to know, Padre, is, What is God like? I never thought much about it before the war. But now all seems different. When I am transferred to a new battalion I want to know what the Colonel is like. He bosses the show, and it makes a lot of difference to me what sort he is. I realize now that I am in the battalion of humanity, and I want to know what the Colonel of the world is like. That is your business, Padre; you ought to know."

For answer the Padre pointed to an image of Jesus on the cross which hung on the wall, and both were silent, looking at that battered, wounded, bleeding Figure, nailed

to a cross, helpless, defeated by the world, broken in all but spirit. After a while the officer said:

"God like that, Padre? No, no; God is almighty, Ruler of the world, King of kings. Jesus is splendid—he is like my friends at the front—sublime in his courage, his patience, his unbroken spirit. But tell me what God is like."

"Yes, God is like that," the Padre said, pointing again to the great Sufferer. "Jesus was weary, hungry, tortured, crucified, and he said, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father!* We have made an awful mistake about God, my friend. He is not off up in the sky. He is here. He suffers in and with the sufferings of humanity. *This is my body which is broken for you!*"

If we turn now to the Bible, and especially to the New Testament, we find that the symbol of God is not a throne of power, but a cross of sorrow, His emblem a Lamb slain on an altar. All through the teaching of Jesus one traces the truth that God is limited, hindered, often delayed, but always trying to redeem man. Take the parables. The Sower is successful in only one of four cases. In spite of good soil and good seed the Tares make havoc of the wheat, and can not be got rid of until the harvest. The man with one Talent failed to make use of his powers, and God is helpless to do anything with him. The foolishly fond old father —whose sorrow and joy alike break our hearts—is as powerless to bring the Prodigal back as he was to detain him from going away. All he can do is to wait for one far-wandering and lost, hoping that he will return, or soon or late, humble and hungry

of heart. The Ten Virgins, the Great Supper, all the parables, in fact, have the same underlying idea. So also the Beatitudes, the ideal of which, as some one has said, is the capacity to suffer and endure and yet retain the will for good, to keep a clean, hopeful, forgiving heart.

Not only in the teaching of Jesus, but also in his experience, we find everywhere the suggestion of limitation in God Himself. His own knowledge, he said, was limited. Some things he could not do, because of unbelief. In his practice of prayer Jesus was aware that the will of God may be conditioned by things of which we have no knowledge. Indeed, a deeper analysis of the Gethsemane prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass," suggests that though God might be willing to let it pass He might not be able to do so. Anyway, the prayer was not answered, and Jesus drank the cup to its dregs without losing faith—a fact for us to remember when, in a bitter hour, we pour out our hearts for some one beloved and our request is not granted. Suppose the prayer of Jesus had been answered. There would have been no Cross, no Empty Tomb, no revelation of that incredible power which men mistake for weakness—the only power equal to the hard, stupid, cunning thing called sin. They speak to a pitiless force who try to reason with the self-induced irrationality of sin. Because sin is below reason only that which is ineffably above reason can melt it away. Jesus is the Redeemer of men because he set God free in his life, revealing an awful yet

gentle power which alone can break the spell of evil in us and in the world.

It is astonishing, as an English novelist has said, how we come through blood and fire and tears to learn what deep truths are hidden in the familiar ideas of Christian faith. The very idea of Incarnation implies a God who identifies Himself with our finitude, shares our pain and struggle, our joys and sorrows, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, tempted, despised, rejected, facing the worst to unveil the best. Since God is love, His self-limitation, like His self-impartation, was necessitated as much by His nature as by the need of man. It was not an isolated act in time, but an eternal process—"the climax of immanence in the world," as Illingworth used to say; not a belated device of God to put straight things that had gone wrong, but the fulfillment of an age-long dream. From all eternity God must have been planning to reveal Himself and by such revelation help man to achieve a personality in essence like His own. His delay was due to His limitation, since He must needs wait for the developing capacity of man. At last, in the fullness of time, there grew a Man through whom God could fully manifest Himself, One who, by his purity and valor, his patience and pity, became the human voice of the Eternal Love:

> "He walked here, the shadow of him Love,
> The speech of him soft music, and his step
> A Benediction."

Rich and revealing are the practical meanings of the truth of my theme, if we have ears to hear and hearts to heed. God is imprisoned in our human world, a captive struggling to be free, forever seeking His liberty which is also our redemption. He is imprisoned in our unjust social order, in our organized selfishness, in the neglected child, in the unsympathetic parent, in the church that has a name to live but is dead. Often it is said that improvements in social environment are valueless, because all good depends on character. No doubt; but it is also true that by helping to make a nobler communal life we may help to roll the stone from the grave of Lazarus. Many handicaps exist, handicaps of foolish fashions, formal religion, and foul iniquity; but God bears them too. What unused strength lies hidden in the weak, what undiscovered heroism in the defeated, what hopes of salvation in the lost, if by some art or skill we can find the key to unlock the prison. Who labors in behalf of the weary and world-broken, for the little ones that carry the future in their hearts—for juster, wiser, more merciful laws—is helping to liberate God in the world, as the springtime sets free the snowbound streamlets and sends them singing into the valleys. All noble reform, all social engineering, all wise and forward-looking enterprise, finds here its motive, its power and its consecration.

Nay, more; God is imprisoned in each of us—even in you and me—a seed that sleepeth until we water the ground on which it lies, a voice we can

one day no longer deny. It is His work in which we are hindered, and He is hindered in us, hindered from bringing to flower and fruit in us that beautiful thing which we were made to be, and meant to be, hindered by our fear, our stupidity, our ignorance, our unbelief, our irrelevant worries, our past sins, our present mistakes, our persistent faults. Every fault overcome, every bad habit cast away, every sin repented of, strikes off the chains that set God free, and adds to that increase of God which is the richness of man—helps to the attainment of that release of personality which is the finest art and strategy of life. Such a victory is not won all at once, nor once for all, and it is much easier for some than for others. Emerson had his moral mining done for him before he was born; Burns had to dig his own ore. No matter; by as much as pain, sorrow, hard trial, and bitter struggle set God free in us, by so much do we learn why we are here, what life means, and to what high end it moves.

As no two leaves on a tree are alike, so in each human soul there is something unique, something not to be found anywhere else, a beauty peculiar, particular, precious. It is for each of us to learn so to live that the hidden beauty within us may be brought to bloom; that the star which shines for us alone—"My Star," as Browning called it—may glow in the sky which over-arches our common life. Each must live out his own life, his best life, walking with reverent feet in the Road of the Loving Heart, knowing that He who made us hath need

of that shy and lonely thing in us which is most our own, because it is most akin to Him.

"God is not a looker-on
At the life of any one;
But a bearer of all grief,
And a sharer in relief.

"God can never stand aloof
In reproach, denial, reproof;
God is under every ban,
God is part of every man."

A MIRROR OF THE SOUL

PRAYER

Eternal God, darkness and light art Thou, a heart of fire and a robe of shadow. Ever the fire burns; ever the shadow hovers on all the horizons of our thought. Yet is Thy darkness better than our light, and in the shadow of Thy presence there is peace. Yea, in the twilight Thou seemest to draw near, and when wonder subdues us Thou beginnest to be a voice of stillness in the soul. In the atmosphere and order of the house of prayer may we learn that humility that is wisdom, and a faith that looks beyond the shadows of time.

How sacred and wonderful a thing it is to worship Thee; to yield our minds to a Mind wiser than our own and be taught; to open our hearts to an awful purity and be cleansed. O Thou who never leavest us, wander from Thee as we may, bring us home from a far country to our better, truer selves. From our troubled, lower nature, to which we are prone to decline, lift us to the heights whence cometh the strength of vision. Give us brave, calm, understanding hearts, while we thank Thee for divine memories, edifying fellowships, and deathless hopes.

Lord, we are pilgrims and strangers with Thee, seeking a country; give us to go singing through a land which Thou hast made very fair. In dark ways be our light, in dim paths be our guide; and if we must sometimes journey alone, may we walk without fear, knowing that we go not unattended. So shall our sorrow be healed, our joy refined, our duty made plain, and our flitting life established in Thy fellowship. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

A MIRROR OF THE SOUL

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul; hope thou in God." Ps. 42:5.

ONE of the little classics of the life of faith is a tiny, golden book called *The Mirror of Simple Souls.* Written in the twilight of the thirteenth century, it brings a whiff of a time far gone, but, like all the writings of the mystics, it has upon it the dew of morning. With the self-effacing humility of that day, the author left off his name and gave us only the story of his life in God. Albeit a book of a time of violence and war, of rough conflict and wild alarm, it has in it the stillness of a great peace, and tells how some unknown saint won the only victory worth winning. Gentle, wise and serene, the sum of its high and simple teaching is told in these quaint words:

"Heaven is no other thing than God himself. Why was the Thief in Paradise anon as the soul was departed from his body? He saw God, and that is Paradise; for other thing is not Paradise than to see God. And this doth the soul in sooth, at all times that she is uncumbered of herself."

As in every such story of the inner life, one sees gleams and glints of that other and greater Mirror of the Soul—the Book of the Psalms. How won-

derful is that tiny book of song linked with the name of the poet-king of Israel, who, from following his herds on the hillside, came to the throne of his people, bringing his shepherd flute. He lived in rough and cruel days, an antique king in a barbaric age, and yet such a poet was he that three thousand years since he lived his words are still the paths whereby the soul climbs up to God. To-day his genius is a telescope which brings the stellar truths into intimate nearness, and round the world march the melodies of his flute.

Above the bed of King David, so tradition tells us, there hung a harp. At midnight, as the wind rippled over the strings, it made such music that the king could not sleep and must needs rise, and, till the pillar of dawn rose in the sky, search his soul for words worthy to fit the music of his harp. Thus, out of the beautiful, broken dreams of a man of the people which were of old came this book of the music of the human heart when swept by the winds of God. For a psalm is a poem, and something more—a poem born of one of those deep and tender moods which come unbidden, an hour of sorrow or of joy, when the soul melts into love and prayer, and the founts of feeling flow; a mood spontaneous and rapturous when the heart pours itself out, knowing no ambition, no self-seeking, in penitence or thanksgiving. A psalm is not made; it grows. It is a gift, not a trophy, an uprush of the heart at the touch of Him whose coming is as the wind moving to and fro in mystery.

I

King David was a man of like passions as ourselves—weak to the point of crime, stormy to the edge of violence; yet in very truth "a man after God's own heart." He lived near the eternal things, and about his name were gathered a treasury of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs which has been the inspiration and solace of centuries. It is a little book of prayer and praise, but in it, as Heine said, are sunrise and sunset, birth and death, promise and fulfillment—the whole drama of the soul of man. Truly, it is a mirror of the soul, in which one sees its lyric burst of joy, its sob of penitence, its moan of sorrow, its cry of defeat and its shout of victory—even as we know them in our own souls. Men of letters, looking into this little book, find in it something not found anywhere else, never better stated than by a noble critic in these memorable words:

"The Bible is going to be eternal, for that which decides the vitality of any book is precisely that which decides the value of any soul—not the knowledge it contains, but simply the attitude it assumes toward the seen as well as the unseen. The attitude of the Bible is just what every soul must, in its highest and truest moods, always assume—that of a wise wonder in front of such a universe as this, that of a noble humility before God such as He in whose great hand we stand. This is why—like Alexander's mirror—the Bible reflects to-day, and will reflect for-

ever, every wave of human emotion, every passing event of human life—reflect them as faithfully as it did to the great and simple people in whose great and simple language it was written. Coming from the heart of man, it goes straight to the heart.

"Now the great features of the Bible rhythm are a recognized music apart from a recognized law—artifice so completely abandoned that we forget that we are in the realm of art—pauses so divinely set that they seem to be wood-notes wild, though all the while they are, and must be, governed by a mysterious law too sweet to be formulated; and all kinds of beauties infinitely beyond the triumphs of the metricist, but beauties that are unexpected. There is the living meter of the surging sea in the soul of him who speaks, it is the effluence of the emotions and passions which are passing into words. And if this be so of other parts of the Bible, what is it in the Book of Psalms, where the flaming steeds of song, though really kept strongly in hand, seem to run reinless as the wild horses of the wind."

David was a contemporary with Homer in Greece. They were not far apart. Only a short sail over soft seas would take one from Mount Olympus to Mount Olivet. Yet when we pass from the Psalms of David into the poems of Homer we pass into a different world. Both belong to the everlasting music of the human race and they have much in common, but over the Psalms arches a different sky. Homer looks up from the lap of earth, personifying human virtue and valor; the Psalmist looks down from above, bur-

dened with the awful sense of the infinite. One hears in the music of the shepherd flute notes to which Homer was a stranger—deep calling unto deep, height answering to height, with a crashing finale of symbol, organ, trumpet and drum. Here are royal aspirations and simple shepherd sentiments; a robe for every mood—sackcloth for penitence, armor for victory, rent garments for sorrow, tunics blood-splashed with sin, and flowered coats of joy. Here are lyrics quivering with pain, songs ragged and torn by the cry of souls in distress, and hymns of praise under a sky unstirred by storm, unflecked by cloud. Here are prayers of faith, of passionate yearning for God, and out-reachings of soul to lay hold of Him who is the refuge and reward of the life of man.

II

Look at the human scene in the Psalms. There the rapture of faith is so blended with the misery and woe of life that it is often hard to know whether the reigning note is a deep joy or a bitter sadness. Ever recurs the sense of oppression, and the memory of oppression, and the fear of oppression, and songs of divine consolation alternate with cries for revenge—as was natural in the hymns of a land so often ravaged by war, tossed to and fro between rival empires, and left desolate. Naturally, too, the question which distresses all the Psalmists is the same question which throws a shadow over literature and

life, now as it did then—the question of undeserved suffering. Those ancient singers longed to believe that right-doing secured prosperity and protection, and when it seemed to do so they were happy. But the great problem of the world is not so easily solved, and the facts were often sadly the other way, and their faith was sorely tried. Always the prosperity of the proud and the wicked filled them with dismay; and their music sometimes ebbs and flows between defiance and despair.

While the "deep singing of the poor" is heard in the Psalms, it is not pity for the poor that we hear, but a demand for justice as against the arrogant and powerful oppressor. The typical bad man in the Psalms is the tyrant, whether he rule by cruelty or by cunning. Unlike the fool, the bloodthirsty tyrant does not say in his heart there is no God. He says: "Tush, God hath forgotten"; and the Psalmist almost felt, at times, that he was right—for the heavens seemed brass! What terrible indictments are here against the murderer of the innocent, whose eyes are "set against the poor!" The deceitful tyrant is drawn with equal indignation. He is the usurper who draws his net with flattering words and catches the poor and the weak to despoil them by robbery. Nevertheless, the Psalmist does not lose heart. In spite of the contradictions of life, he feels certain, as most good men feel certain still, that "the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish forever." The great prop of society and the pillar of

stability in the mind of the Psalmist is the just Judge. He is moderate, He is gentle, He lifts the poor out of the mire and gathers the outcasts. Aye, he is like God, who hearest the cry of the weak and healeth the broken in heart.

III

Above this human scene hovers the Divine order, and it is in that higher realm that we must look for the ruling ideas of the Psalms. Yet the very sense of that eternal order, so quick and vivid, induced in those long dead singers a poignant sense of the fleetingness of mortal life, of the vanishing of all things human. Sometimes, as in the 90th Psalm—that majestic funeral hymn of the human race, with its swift death of morning flowers, and its human myriads swept away by the flood of years—this mood becomes terrifying and the hope of man is as frail as the bird-song in the death march of Chopin. How helpless is man, pursued by Time, overtaken by Death—his life is a span, a vapor that melts, a tale told in the night; here to-day and to-morrow gone. What a shadow he is, what shadows he pursues! Herein the Psalmists were wise in that, instead of being crushed by the brevity of life, they accepted it as the Divine plan. Until we make our peace with the fact that we are pilgrims and strangers in the earth, like our fathers before us, life is a riddle and a tragedy. Once we face this fact, the wise men

will take refuge from the evanescence of things mortal in the sanctuary of the eternal.

Even so, "nothing but the infinite pity of God is equal to the infinite pathos of human life." Therefore, the Psalmists trust in God—just God, no dogmas about Him, but in the reality of His being and the mystery of His mercy; God who is from everlasting to everlasting, the Home of the Soul. Here, if anywhere, is revealed *the encompassing God.* Across distant ages, from hearts long fallen into dust, we hear voices telling us in song what they had learned in sorrow; and their music lifts us above the terror of the transitory, above fear of dark fatality, into the fellowship of the Eternal—helping us to turn our sorrow into song. Nowhere else—outside the little Book of the Eternal Life which tells the story of Jesus—can be found such a profound and vivid sense of the hallowing presence of God in the world. The clouds are His chariots, the thunder His voice, and His footsteps bow the heavens. The Psalmists celebrate the power of God, His Wisdom, His Justice, His Fidelity with every variation of melody, but most of all His pity. What fills them with an abiding wonder is that God considers man and visits him with salvation. Other hope they have none. They rest in the integrity of the Eternal, and His loving-kindness is more than life. There is in these songs a mingled agitation and peace—a deep and grateful peace in God, joined with an eager, incessant, passionate hunger for more of God. When

God seems far away, the music falls to a lower octave and life loses its rhythm, its radiance, and its soul of loveliness. When He is near, the sun is up, the dew is on the grass, the trees clap their hands, and flowing waters glisten with His beauty!

Hence the solemn, overwhelming sense of sin in the Psalms. Much of the religion of to-day is self-centered egotism; nothing else. How refreshing it is to escape from this clamor of self-assertive vanity into the sweet humility of the Psalms, with their clear vision of the horror of sin in the light of the holiness of God. We are wont to think of sin to-day more in its social aspects. Not so the Psalmists. "Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned," is their cry, bowed low with the sense of solitary, awful, unshared guilt adhering to each separate soul among all the spirits of the universe. They know that sin is something individual and incommunicable. It is not the guilt of those who tempt us; they have theirs. It is our own, each lonely soul bearing his own burden of shame. Surely no other singers so search us for secret, unconfessed sins. To listen to their pleadings for inward purity, their longings to be made white as snow, is to feel what awful souls dwell in our human clay. Uniting so vivid a sense of God with so keen a vision of sin, the logic would seem to be despair. But the glory of the Psalms is their note of hope. Underneath their sweet-toned, haunting pathos is the grand truth that God is equal to the horror of sin, not only pure but purifying.

IV

Have we among us to-day a religious life equal to that which sings in the Psalms? One doubts it. Join with this a further question—how was it that in a rude and dark age the religious affections attained to such full flower? No writer since that time, not even Augustine, has equaled the Psalmists in deep and lofty religious utterance. Where did that ripe and rich religious life come from? How was it possible at such a time and amid such scenery? It must be that in the olden time the human soul was alone with God as it has never been alone with Him since. Life was simpler then than now, and as it has become more intricate and engrossing, it has also become more distracting. Our modern world, with its noble and fruitful intellectual agitations, its research into nature, its coöperation in social enterprise, absorbs men; and the invisible world, which in former times drew to itself the yearnings of the soul, seems dim and far away. Human pity, and the vision of social wrong—notes hardly heard in the Psalms—turn men away, apparently, from fellowship with God. It ought not to be so, but it is so. Looking out upon the life of our time, and, like Maurice, confessing "the sins of my age as my own," it is clear that this is a clew to the restlessness of the modern man. Rich as our age is, full of splendors, it is yet strangely distracted and pathetically poor, seeking satisfaction in things that can never satisfy the soul. Never were so many men running hither and yon

hunting for they know not what. What they need is that overwhelming, softening, glorifying sense of God which glows in the Psalms—that is the touch magnetic, the one lost chord needed to give unity, harmony and dignity to our prodigal and multitudinous life.

Can we of to-day have the great and simple faith of the singers of the Psalms? Assuredly. This is the sublime secret of all the Saints, who learned that however complex life may be, however distracting on the surface, at heart it is simple—for "He keepeth those in perfect peace whose minds are fixed on Him." If the world seems a confusion worse confounded, it is because our inner life is a medley. Riding on a midnight train and unable to sleep not long ago, I read every line of the Book of the Psalms —thinking betimes of the man in the engine, having our lives in his hands, his eyes fixed on two gleaming streaks of steel as we thundered through the night. How different from the mode of travel in the days of David; and yet, though all the world has changed, my need of God and my relation to Him were just what David felt ages ago. Aye, and He was with me in the night, amid the rumble of the rushing train, My God, the healer of my sorrows, the cleanser of my sins by the same incredible mercy with which He cleansed the poet-king in the days of old. Only the outward condition of life had changed; the way of prayer remained the same, and the simple words of the Psalm became a shining ladder to me in the train as they had been on a hillside in Judea.

V

Books have been written tracing the influence of the Psalms on literature and life, but let us follow only one of them a little way along its melodious journey adown the centuries. With the single exception of the Lord's Prayer, no other bit of writing has done more for the heart-life of the race than the Fifty-first Psalm. Multitudes have gone from earth to meet the destiny of man breathing the words of the great confessional hymn. Its first words in the old Vulgate version—Miserere, "have mercy"—have been the last words of many of the noblest souls of the race. Just before his death, with his left hand mutilated by torture, Savanarola wrote a commentary on this Psalm. Sir Thomas More repeated it on the scaffold, and Lady Jane Grey recited it at her execution. Roland Taylor shouted it amid the flames of martyrdom, and was struck in the mouth for not saying it in Latin. When Arnold of Rugby understood that he was dying and they asked him what they should read to him, instantly he selected "the Fifty-first Psalm." The northernmost grave on earth, so it is said, is one made for a member of the expedition of Sir George Nares to the Arctic Sea. It is near Cape Brechy, on the brow of a hill covered with eternal snow, overlooking crowded masses of ice stretching away into the northern night, where, like a lamp hung over the door of eternity, shines the polar star. A large stone covers the sleeper, and on a copper plate at the head

the words are engraved: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Never did the pathos of those words find a more perfect setting—only the mercy of God is whiter than snow!

Athanasius asked his friends to repeat this Psalm as they lay awake in the stillness of the night. Did you ever try that? Oh, it is wonderful, and if you have any vanity left in you at night, it will flee away before those great words uttered in the dark where only God can see and hear—when you can hear nothing but the beating of your own heart. Try it, my friends, and then you will know why that Psalm has lived so long, and why it will be alive and flashing when the last man lifts his trembling heart in prayer on this dying earth. All down the ages it has echoed and reëchoed in the song and prayer of the church, and who can tell how many poor souls have been led and lifted by those old familiar words out of weariness into the rest that remaineth for those who give their hearts to God the Father Almighty—out of sin into the purity of His presence!

Men and women, busy and distracted about many things, heart-hungry and ill at ease, take this tiny book of prayer and praise, white with age yet aglitter with the dew of each new morning, tested and tried by ages of sorrowful and victorious experience, rich with memories and wet with tears of the human race—take it to heart, read it, love it, live with it, hold communion with it in the still hour, and learn that God hath made us for Himself, and unquiet are our hearts till they live and toil and rest in Him!

WHAT EVERYBODY BELIEVES

PRAYER

Eternal Father, Thou art the Love that never forgets, the Light that never fails, the Life that never ends; humbly we seek Thee in the fellowship of prayer. As we bow together the cares of life become easier to bear, and the lonely hurt of our hearts is healed by a great peace. Teach us to live always in the sense of Thy nearness and the vision of the infinite meaning of life, making trial of a great trust in Thee.

Behold us, folk of many families, one in our need and longing, and so purify and unite our spirits that we may be as the Body of Christ, wearing His seamless robe. Let us not live on the low level to which our toil tends to drag us down; lift us to the wider outlook of a quiet place of vision and service. Show us the wonder and beauty of life as it reveals its worth in the light of Thy truth and its prophecy in the light of Thy love.

O Thou who turnest the shadow of death into morning, show us that in all disappointment Thou art near us, in all darkness Thou art enlightening us, in all temptation or sorrow or weariness Thou art still loving us. Incline our hearts to seek Thy truth and serve Thy holy will, that, having lived faithfully and reverently, we may rejoice at eventide when the shadows fall, knowing that in death Thou wilt give us life. In His name, Amen.

WHAT EVERYBODY BELIEVES

"Lord, increase our faith." Luke 17:5.

THERE must have been a smile on the face of Jesus, or at least a twinkle in his eye, when he heard these words. He had been talking to his disciples—and to us—about forgiveness. Take heed to yourselves, he said; if a brother sins against you, rebuke him—so far all of us are ready to obey. If he repent, forgive him, Jesus added—and even that is not impossible. But he went further and said: If he sins seven times in a day, and turns to you seven times saying, "I am sorry," you must forgive him. A tense hush followed, such as we feel in our own hearts, while the disciples looked at one another in helpless wonder—he was asking the impossible. Hence the prayer of the text, "Lord, give us more faith." Jesus replied by saying that even the smallest faith—no larger than a mustard seed—if used, is self-enlarging, and can do impossible things.

Hence my theme, which is not an effort to reduce faith to a minimum, but to show that we have more faith than we realize or use. My search is for the secret of all our sanctities, the source of all our higher sanctions, an adventure in quest of that eternal mysticism which is the permanent fountain of

faith. My wish is to make vivid the reality back of all religion—not logic, but that unseen element of thought and yearning of which all men are aware but which none can define; the desire—yea, the demand—for spiritual support from a source hid in spiritual mystery; the urge out of which emerges an order of ideas, making us pilgrims in quest of One who woos, justifies and satisfies the best in us. My aim is to go down below the issues of recent debates —so unhappy in taste and temper—to the things we cannot help admitting to be valid, and to deny which is to resign our manhood. A wise teacher put it aptly when he said: "*The grit in us is moved not by the many things we try to believe, but by the few things we can not persuade ourselves to disbelieve.*" What we need is not faith in more things, but more faith in a few profound things which make us men, whence men in all ages have derived inward sustaining and hope. What does everybody believe?

First, *all men believe in God.* They may not use the name; they may not be able to prove that He exists by logic, since logic itself is not fundamental. They may not be able to form a satisfying conception of His nature and being, but all men know that there was Something here before we were here, Something which will be here when we are gone. All human beings have lying in their souls a seed of God, a thirst for God, a dim, dumb sense of God, a belief in God. In the universe outside of us, in the minds inside of us, we find that kind of order which makes us believe that Another is over-ruling all things. It is a faith

which can neither be demonstrated nor argued down. For while God, which is the name we give both to the mystery and the meaning of life, is revealed in experience, He can not be uttered, and in a conflict of words we may lose the unutterable God, before whom silence is wisdom and wonder becomes worship.

What is God? Some of us love the phrase of Sebastian Frank: *"God is an unutterable sigh lying in the depths of the soul."* He who has ears can hear that sigh of yearning and longing breathing through the life of man, echoed in his literature and his liturgy; a pathos in his joy, a loneliness that wakes with him in the morning, a wistfulness that haunts him at eventide. It speaks in the cry of Job, "O that I knew where I might find Him," and in the great authentic words of Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee." It rises above all panics of faith; it lives under all dogmatic depressives. Many waters can not quench it. The cycles of human history have afforded ample time for the negation of God to prove itself valid, and it has never been more impotent than to-day. At the end of the ages, facing the freshness of the universe and the life of the soul, God must be reckoned the most precious asset of humanity.

Yet to-day many are haunted by the horrible fear that our highest faith is only a fruit of our own desires, a wisp of wishes sanctified by tradition and society—if not an infantile "complex" having its

source in a physical instinct. For that reason, to the saying of Frank we must add the noble words of Matthew Arnold: *"There is an enduring Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness,"* and insight confirmed alike by individual experience and the testimony of history. Byron in his year of wildest revelry wrote in a letter to Tom Moore: "Virtue, as I begin to see, is the only thing that will do in this damned world." Exactly; the man who fancies that the moral law is a fiction agreed upon is taught the truth of a moral order by terror and tragedy, as Byron found his youth blighted by "the sear and yellow leaf." Moral law is not a mere convention; it is written in the constitution of things. Each man learns—in proportion to his degree of spiritual progress—that he is living in a moral order, without which humanity could not long breathe in sanity.

There is no denying the witness of history. It is not an accident that civilizations decay and die, not for lack of intelligence but for lack of righteousness. Their ruins litter the past. Nor is it an accident that out of every great cataclysm always an idea emerges and prevails, as out of the World War the vision of world unity arose—a vision which will prevail whether we like it or not. Indeed, our likes or dislikes have nothing to do with these uprising ideas which reshape history. They are not human inventions, but Divine revelations. The word of Mohammed which he put into the mouth of God is true: "Thinkest thou that I made these stars in

jest?" The apostrophe to Duty as the daughter of the voice of God in the ode by Wordsworth is as valid as it is memorable: "Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong, and the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong."

Second, in presenting a gram of radium to Madame Curie at the University of Chicago, a man of science used these words: *"The most important thing in the world is belief in the reality of moral and spiritual values."* It is profoundly true. When this faith fails, chaos comes again. These intangible treasures are the bullion in the bank of humanity, and without it all our moral currency is worthless. Without this faith we have no standard, no stability. Once let this faith grow dim, as it has well nigh done in the blurred cynicism of to-day, and our moral life will be as hopeless as the economic confusion of Russia. The most vital element in the life of this nation is the worship of God in the church on Sunday, if only because it keeps alive faith in spiritual values. The preacher may be prosaic, but—God of dreams!—think what happens when that flickering light goes out, how great is the darkness!

Jesus said to a group of peasants on the hillsides: "Ye are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth." Without these sensitive and believing souls, who love right and try after goodness, the whole human business rots, stinks, and falls to pieces. Never can I forget going to Canterbury to attend a Church Congress. Arriving early, I went into a movie show—cinemas, the English call them—where

tom-tom jazz was going on and a cheap, vulgar story was on the screen. After a few moments I left and went to the old gray Cathedral—an ancient home of culture, dignity, refinement, and prayer—a bulwark of the holy things of life and its ordered moral loveliness. "Here," I thought in my heart, "is our final protection against the tide of vulgarity running in the wake of war." The story of Manoah and his wife came to mind out of the old Hebrew centuries. God granted them a vision, and they were frightened, thinking it an omen of death. But the wife with her finer insight said: "No, if He had meant to kill us, He would not have shown us these things." The vision of moral values is the prophecy alike of our high duty and destiny.

There is a Tennyson line which puts it magnificently: *"We needs must love the highest when we see it."* The capacity for such an appeal, the compulsion of it, attest in a positive way the sway over us of the power of moral and spiritual values. And this capacity can be cultivated, like every gift of the soul. There is a famous story of Sir Joshua Reynolds taking a friend through an art gallery. At the door the friend burst into praise of a number of secondary, ultra-rosy works of Rubens. Sir Joshua said nothing, but as they strolled from room to room he dropped quiet remarks about the technique of the really great pictures they passed. So good was the lesson, and so apt the pupil, that when they came near the door again, he hardly looked at the florid works. Our protection against vulgarity

is not prohibition, but an unveiling of the best; "we needs must love the highest." Moral taste is civilization, as well as salvation. Ugliness can only be defeated by beauty, as evil can only be overcome by good. Where there is no abiding vision of truth, beauty and goodness—values impalpable and seemingly fragile—the people perish in vulgar greed and lust, and their glittering streets become moral sewers.

Third, *everybody believes in prayer,* which Milton called "that lowly loftiness of soul which is exalted by its own humiliation." Yes, they do, though they deny the fact and refuse to use the word. Every man is a mystic, however he may hide the secret, vaguely hungering for a peace which the world cannot give, forever seeking for the permanent amid the fleeting. Every heart is haunted by needs deeper than we have fathomed, and yearnings that reach beyond sense and time. As James said, "We and God have business with each other," and down in our hearts—when we are forced to face our own souls—each of us knows that "in that business our highest destiny is fulfilled." To ask why men pray is like asking why birds sing. We are made so. Man is made for prayer, as sparks ascending seek the sun. He would not need religious faith if its objects did not exist, and when he leaves off prayer he is thwarting his own nature.

Prayer is its own exposition; all explanations leave its secret still a mystery. Meredith was right: "Who rises from prayer a better man, his

prayer is answered,"—and that is as far as we need to go. The psychology of prayer is but an outer scaffolding on the wall of the temple, far from the inmost shrine where the fret and burden of life are taken away. The secret of prayer is with those who pray. To them the porter openeth. Prayer is at once an art and an adventure, and those who have learned its laws and dared its higher reaches find springs and power and fountains of joy unguessed by those who stay behind. Mayhap the next great step in the advance of man will be a further dimension of the spiritual instinct, and the discovery that the problem of the world will be solved by prayer. Unless God build the house we build in vain.

Fourth, it is hardly necessary to say that *everybody believes in Jesus;* the sheer wonder of his moral beauty compels confidence. Jew and Gentile alike would agree with Charles Lamb when he ended a debate in a London coffee-house by saying that if Shakespeare were to enter all would rise to do him honor, but if Jesus were to open the door all would kneel in homage. "We needs must love the highest when we see it," and the highest vision of spiritual grace granted us in the dim country of this world is the life and character of Jesus. Argument is not necessary; our hearts tell us so. Men may doubt many dogmas about Jesus, they may deny records and stories of miracles, but in respect to his purity and his goodness there is no denial, no infidelity—save, alas, the infidelity of following afar off and

with stumbling step, whereof we are all guilty. Nor is the reason far to seek if we look deeply into our own hearts.

The late Anatole France was wont to say that a beautiful poem is like a violin bow drawn across the fibers of our souls, setting not only the thoughts of the poet but our own souls singing. We love our lyric bards so fondly because they speak to us of ourselves, and help us to utter our inarticulate melody. Just so men love Jesus, as they love no other being who has walked on earth, because he unlocks a door in us which no one else can open, and sets our souls singing a song of deliverance from sin and the shadow of despair. It means everything that he is with us, never far away, waiting for us to return to his way of purity, humility and peace. A friend in Brussels took me to see the sights of the city, among them the Temple of the People, where the most rabid radicals hold forth. Placing me in the center of the room, he went to the platform behind which was a tapestry, and as he drew back the curtain there was a glorious painting of Jesus—not five feet from where the wildest agitator stood to speak his bitterness. And there is something more which a searcher of the soul may tell us in his own manner:

"Life reduces us all one by one to a position in which, if we are sincere with ourselves, we confess we have failed. It may be that we have erred or transgressed, and the fruits

of our sin have come back upon us overwhelmingly. It may be that, face to face with life, we have suddenly become aware of a certain moral weariness which makes the very prospect of days and years tiresome and intolerable. It may be that we have found ourselves out in some sinister and treacherous aptitude which honestly makes us afraid. It may be that in our thinking about life, about this whole human scene, which at best is so ambiguous, so capable of diverse and contrary interpretations, with its mornings and evenings, its headlong hours and bitter memories, its life and death—that the whole aspect of things puzzles and frustrates our will. However this sense of defeat may come to us and bring us to a standstill, out of it, in a struggle for our life, for our self-respect, for our sanity, we are ready to accept Christ and let him help us."

Fifth, in the face of the fact of death, and the awful stillness which it makes when it passes by, *everybody clings to the faith that love can never lose its own.* In bright hours we may affect indifference in this matter, and talk glibly, till our hearts are broken over folded hands—then it is different. Pasteur, with his dead babe on his knee, went beyond science and affirmed his faith that he would see his child again. It is to such hearts—so many and so lonely—that the mighty prophets of the immortal life speak, and no one with such a torrent of piled-up imagery as Shelley with his evangel of "the painted veil" hiding the mystery and the certainty of immortality. All through his writings—in the calm aloofness of Prometheus, in the glowing wonder of Adonais, in the hopeless abandonment of Beatrice,

in lyrics, tales and golden histories, such as an angel might tell—we hear the gospel that life is the dream from which death is the awakening to a life fairer than all our visions. Other poets—Tennyson falteringly, Browning victoriously—take up the song of the soul and its triumph over death and the dark.

What it all means came home to me in a vine-covered cottage in England, as I watched the ivy try to fling its tendrils across the open window space. Day by day the effort went on. Day by day the pioneer tendril lengthened—a tiny adventure of faith—tossed by the winds, and foiled by the plate glass which it could not lay hold of with its tentacles. But, undismayed, the stems grew, until, at last, they reached the other side of the window and laid hold of the brick wall. They had reached the further side, and won. In relation to the rest of us, the poets are like those advance-tendrils; we reach out wistfully, but they have laid hold of the immortal life in time. And Jesus! Ah, when we think of him in the shadow of death a joy moves our hearts in a tide as warm as the tears we shed by the grave.

These are the real fundamentals, these are the things that matter most—the sigh for God which wells up in every human heart, and its answer in fellowship with Him in the service of His will in loyalty to moral and spiritual values; the life of prayer in which we link our fleeting days and fitful wills with His creative love and purpose; the following of Jesus in whom He is revealed in a life like our own; and the inextinguishable hope of the soul

which defies death and wins the eternal life in time. Here is the vital essence and stuff of which life and religion are made—the pearl of great price, the truth about truth. Upon such a basis we can build the house of our nights and days, knowing that life is a capacity for the highest things. He only is wise who makes it a pursuit of the highest, an eager, incessant quest of the truth, a noble utility, a lofty honor, a wise freedom, a faithful service.

Long ago Clement of Alexandra said that there are three stages in the life of the spirit—Faith, Knowledge, and Love. Faith he defined as unfolding knowledge, and Knowledge as scientific faith; but Love is the crown and consecration of all. Faith is not final; it is a beginning, a dawn, a spring with a glowing summer in its heart. To our faith we must add "knowledge, patience, virtue, love," making our faith an adventure that fulfills itself in achievement, an experiment that realizes itself in experience. Gorki tells us that Tolstoi one day suddenly turned upon him with the question, almost as if he were delivering a blow:

"Why don't you believe in God?" he demanded, in a way to rebuke if not to dismay.

"I have no faith," Gorki replied, seeking to make the answer as devastating as the question, hoping to end the matter.

"It is not true," said Tolstoi. "By nature you are a believer and you cannot get along without God. You will realize it one day. Your disbelief comes of obstinacy, because you have been hurt; the world is

not what you like. There are also some people who do not believe out of shyness. Faith, like love, requires courage and daring. One must say to oneself, 'I believe,'—and everything will explain itself to you. Faith is only a greater love; you must love still more, and then your love will turn to faith."

THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

PRAYER

Infinite Father, by Thy spirit we live moment by moment. Thine is the strength which supports us, whether we do good or ill. Thou, O Lord, art the beauty which enchants us, the truth for which our minds seek, and the love that redeems us from that lower, shadow self which would make us content with something less than the best. Because Thou art our life, teach us to live in Thee always, everywhere, in everything.

Live Thou within us triumphantly, creatively, to purify us of all that is untrue, unclean, and unworthy of Thy fellowship. Help us to attain to that discipline of the body by the spirit which shall make us fit instruments for the expression of Thy truth and the service of Thy will. Grant us the blessing of those who are poor in spirit because they have seen something very rich, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

O Thou who hast made us for Thyself, let there be no satisfaction for us until we are more and better than we are. Take our groping, faltering spirits and make them centers of Thy light and power and loveliness, that life may be lifted out of shadows into realities, and its soul of rhythm and heart of fire be fully revealed. May we be of those who watch and work for the coming of Thy kingdom, as He did in whose name we pray. Amen.

THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

"Pilate said unto him, What is truth?" John 18:38.
"Jesus said unto him, I am the truth." John 14:6.

PERHAPS we do injustice to Pontius Pilate in that we did not see his face and hear the tone of his voice when he asked, What is truth? He has come down to us in the character of a cynic, and if that was his mood he asked the question in scorn and with a thinly veiled sneer. Had he been asked in that mood to answer his own question, no doubt he would have said that the truth is the fiction agreed, the lie that survives. But it may be that, warned by his wife, who had been troubled in a dream, and in the presence of that Figure—gentle, serene, majestic, who, unlike any other prisoner, asked for no mercy—he was touched to wistfulness and felt vaguely, if only for a moment, that there may be a realm of reality beyond what we see and hear. Anyway, like so many men when they are touched by that mood, he did not stay to hear the answer to his inquiry.

What Jesus would have said in reply we do not know, but one recalls those words spoken in the tender and intimate fellowship of the Upper Room, *"I am the truth"*—surely the most remarkable utterance that ever fell from mortal lips! No one else

has ever uttered such words to humanity; no one else can do it without absurdity. Either they are sheer nonsense, or we have here an answer to the deepest question that haunts the human mind, a disclosure of what all the world is seeking. Jesus does not say that he is simply a teacher of the truth, but that he *is* the truth; not all truth, but the highest truth; the truth most worth knowing—*the truth that makes all other truth true.* It is amazing, and if it be so we have personality and idea joined, the practical and the theoretical, activity and philosophy, theology and life united, not in a dogma, but in a Person—an unveiling, in one incomparable Life of heroic moral loveliness, of the Spirit that moves the sun and all the stars. And that, indeed, is what Christianity is: revelation by incarnation, the Word become flesh, the abstract made concrete; the invisible humanity of God walking with us, sitting at our table, and breaking the bread of life.

The great religions of the world may be divided into two kinds: those that emphasize personality and those that emphasize principles. Of the first, Mohammedanism is an example, its watchword "Great is Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet;" and there is still an amazing force in that faith. But the penalty of emphasizing personality is that it wins only primitive races, and, as a fact, the faith of Islam has not helped in the search for truth since its first outburst of life. Buddhism emphasizes principles and personality is submerged. There was never a more impersonal teacher than the Buddha—

noble, all-pitying, saintly. It is the distinction of Christianity that it unites what these two great religions separate, or at least imperfectly combine: the appeal of a Person and the claims of truth, keeping the two poised. The seeker after truth need not bandage his eyes, and the hungry of heart need not go empty away. Under the banner of Christ the race moves forward—science advances, art blooms, and philosophy unfolds—because love and truth are joined, the love that makes us loyal and the truth that makes us free.

The religion of Jesus is Truth revealed in Life, and for that reason it can never be fixed in a finished, immobile formula, a faith to be attained once for all either by a church or an individual and entered in a creed or a private notebook. No, we lose both its truth and its power unless we continually regain it, fighting the good fight of faith with decisive and fearless trust, following him who of old "made as though he would have gone further." His truth is living, growing, prophetic, revolutionary, and its creative, expansive vitality is inexhaustible. Truly has it been said that the greatest thing in Christianity is that you can never tell what it will do next. Any day it may initiate a new era, seizing some imperfectly evangelized aspect of life and reshaping it to nobler uses, and never does its genius shine with more luster than when we follow it into dark continents, to face there the best which other religions have accomplished. Hitherto its life-imparting power has been equal to the deepest need of humanity, giving to one

age a new sense of God, to another a fresh ideal of personal devotion, and to a third a finer social conscience; and there is still more light to break forth from it, leading us into newer realizations of brotherhood and new applications of social justice.

Happily we are delivered from the dilemma which tormented Dostoevsky, who must be accounted one of the noblest, as he was one of the greatest, of the Russians. To have passed through life with the ever-present dread of a disabling malady, to have spent four years in a Siberian prison which he called *The House of the Dead,* surrounded by the lowest type of men, nearly all of whom hated him with an unreasoning hatred, to have held no bitterness against the State which sent him to such a fate, to have resolutely found in the society of outcasts the soul of goodness in things evil—surely that was a unique modern *Imitatio Christi.* His was the meekness that inherited the earth, if to inherit it is "to bless life and cause others to bless it," and so to live into the lives of robber-murderers as to find among them "deep, strong, beautiful natures—much fine gold under a rough exterior." In his letters we read:

> "There is in the world only one figure of absolute beauty —Christ. That infinitely lovely figure is, as a matter of course, an infinite marvel; the whole Gospel of John is full of the thought; John sees the wonder of the incarnation, the visible apparition of the Beautiful. . . . If any one can prove to me that Christ is outside of truth, and if the truth really does exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with the truth."

For Dostoevsky, of course, Christ was outside the truth, meaning by the truth the law and order of nature—that is, he held the spirit and character of Christ to be supernatural. He was one of those—there are many such—who accept God, His wisdom and His purpose, but who do not accept His world, as if there were some kind of deep dualism between God and His world. And so, driven by this dilemma, he makes his choice between Christ and the truth, as Sologub sided with the truth against Christ. For Dostoevsky, Jesus embodied not only the ineffable Beauty, but all our passionate, pathetic, suffering humanity, before which he prostrated himself in the person of Sonia. Fortunately for us, there is no longer a dark dualism to divide and distract our loyalty, as more and more we see Christ to be the revelation of the eternal order and a fulfillment of all the dreams of humanity. Indeed, we find in him the key by which to interpret the mysterious and awful order of the world, and if we seldom speak of the supernatural it is because we are living in the dawn of a more inclusive vision, in which the higher unity of things which differ is unveiled.

When we speak of Jesus as the Truth we mean much more than the impress of his personality or the gesture of his mind. To be sure, all that he taught has a special character derived from him—a mark distinctive and unique, so that his words shine like gems in any setting—a point of view of his own, whereby those who walk in his radiance look at everything in the light of their knowledge of him.

The Apostle Paul put it perfectly when he spoke of the truth "as truth is in Jesus," implying that there is a Christ point of view, as there is a pagan way of thinking. But when we speak of Jesus as the truth we do not mean merely that truth, as he taught it, bears the stamp of his way of thinking, or the charm of his spirit. That is indeed true, but we mean something different and deeper, something more revealing, more redeeming, more satisfying, *not simply the truth that Jesus taught, but the truth that he was and is;* something capable in some measure of being put into words, but is only to be known in moral character and spiritual personality—a fact which must commend it to those who know how little, after all, words are able to tell of the deeper meaning of life.

First of all, Christ is the truth about God, as those who journeyed with him in the days of his flesh learned to know, as they knew nothing else. They were simple folk who came to his fellowship, which fast ripened into friendship, with certain clear, if crude, ideas of God as a far-off ruler, difficult of access, whose will was known to a favored class. As they walked with Jesus in the lanes of Galilee, slept in the villages, or toiled on the lake, a change was wrought in their inner attitude. Jesus did not argue about God—who, because He is love, is known only as we love—but his friends saw in him something more God-like than they had ever dreamed. God became real, living, near, too wonderful for words, ever ready to welcome the

erring, to receive the sinful, to heal the afflicted, over all, in all, loving all; not a great Possessor, but the supreme Giver; a Father whose love may be known in the simple joys of the lowly no less than in the vision of the seer. Power came into their lives, evil habits lost their lure, life was deeper and death less final. When the Teacher went away, and they looked back at the days spent in his company, it seemed that their life with him had been a walk to Emmaus. His words were the same, but their meaning grew until they shone like stars. His death was the same inscrutable mystery, but it detached itself from its place in time and became something eternal —revealing a love none may measure hidden behind the hardness of life.

What was true in Galilee and Assisi of old may be true to-day, by the same method of faith and friendship; and no other truth can satisfy us. The stately ideas of philosophy may exalt or amaze, but they do not touch the heart nor give the inward sustaining needed in an hour of moral anguish; much less break the awful loneliness in which each soul lives. Devotion dies in the presence of Infinities and Eternities of Carlyle; no one can pray to a Force. But when we see the glory of God revealed in the merciful face of Christ, made known in all he said and did and was here below, the Eternal is brought so near that we can grasp a Hand in the dark, and the fountain of prayer wells up where before there was a desert of arid speculation. Jesus does make God living, loving, personal, and at his touch life is lifted into a

realm of personal fellowship, moral obligations, and spiritual values. The veil is thinned to transparency, and what is elsewhere but

> "Broken gleams, and a stifled splendor, and gloom,"

becomes the master light of all our seeing. When we walk in the Way of Jesus we know the truth that lights up all other truth, and in personal fellowship with him we gain what all the philosophies have sought in vain.

If Christ is the truth about God, if, through him, the spirit and character and will of God are unveiled, he is also, by that fact, the truth about Man. All great tragedy, from Sophocles to Shakespeare, is a revelation of man, showing us, as if his bosom were made of glass, what strange things have their hidings in his heart. Shakespeare found in his own deep heart the materials out of which he created his many-motived figures that move lightly or sadly on his stage—Iago no less than Hamlet—the noble and the foul, the true-hearted and the demon-haunted; and we know as we read whence they came, interpreting what we see by what is in ourselves. But nowhere is there such a revelation of man—what he really is, what he can be, and to what fine issues his life may ascend—as in the life of Jesus, who fathoms deeper depths of our human nature, and in those depths realizes that union with God which enables us to read the revelation of His face. For the humanity of Christ was not made one whit less real by

the Divine presence in him, which acted not to the suppression, but to the intensification, of all that was most fascinatingly human. No doubt many things in Jesus which we call miraculous are part of our human personality, when it is lived out to the full height and depth of the spiritual experience of Jesus; so that when Pilate cried, "Behold! the Man," he spoke more things for our humanity than he ever dreamed. High, pure, ineffably tender was the humanity of Jesus, and the more we know of him the more we know God, because we think of God in terms of these overflowing human meanings which break our hearts with their beauty and command our loyalty by their truth.

Also, there are two matters in regard to which, in the last thrust of thought, we must accept Christ as the Truth, or be reduced to a fear and dismay in which the music of life falls to a lower octave. The first is the whole question of the meaning of life and our part and duty in it. An unexamined life, said Plato, is unlivable; and when we arrive at the ultimate analysis we reach a point where we must either accept Christ or reject him; where, in fact, the question, What think ye of Christ? is the final issue. Doubt as to what we should make of life is often poignant, but Jesus was in no doubt about it. Nor did he have any misgiving as to what it all means, and if we do not accept his reading of it, we must take something else or less, or live a meaningless life. No man can escape a decision in this matter, and whether his life is to realize its full worth and

prophecy depends on whether he puts his name down on the side of Christ or not. This does not mean that he sees it all clearly, still less that he has attained; but it does mean that, forgetting the things which are behind, he takes the risk, runs the race, and dares to make trial for the mark of the prize of the high calling. For that is what it means to accept Christ to-day—not mere rescue, but high-hearted adventure, a challenge to all that a man has of fortitude and heroic faith.

The other matter has to do with "the things which are behind," the spiritual failure and moral defeat of which every honest man is keenly aware if he deals deeply with his own soul. What torments a brave man is not only the shame and folly of his evil act, but also the fact that some one else has borne the stroke or weight of his selfish deed, which turns life into an eternal obligation to make amends. This shadow lies dark over all great literature, from Sophocles to *The Scarlet Letter,* and nowhere, in our day, is it portrayed as in the writings of the great Russians, who know no heaven for the wrong-doer which the wronged can not share. The question with them is not how God can forgive, annul, or undo our evil acts, but how can we forgive ourselves? How can we recover our self-respect? How can we deal with the accusations of our own minds? When we look deeply into this matter, and face it honestly, in the final agony of moral pain we must simply accept Christ—not as a scapegoat, but as the Truth and Love of God in which our sin is

cleansed and the meaning of our sorrow is revealed. Nor can we accept Him without, in the act of His forgiveness, giving Him absolute right to rule and order and possess our lives.

Of course, the truth to which the Teacher in the Upper Room especially refers is the truth of the Life Beyond; no bare, cold immortality, but something more real, more radiant—the power of an endless life by which Christianity won its morning victory. Then, as now, men everywhere were craving for a new power of Divine grace, a new and haunting kind of righteousness, and a more vivid religious faith and hope. Into that time of stress and hazard, when an old form of civilization was dying and another was coming to birth, it was the Christian vision of Eternal Life that gave relief and renewal; and that vision we must recapture for our troubled time. It is an elliptical vision, so to name it, having two focuses, and each is incomplete without the other. It unites two profound insights, in response to the deepest needs of the soul. Time out of mind, to go no further back than Plotinus, one view insists on the Eternal Life as something which we can enter into and experience in this life. As the sky begins at the top of the ground, so the life of the soul in God is a state, a quality, with which days and nights, months and years, have not to do. It is a timeless life, exempt from flux and mutation; and yet this truth, taken alone, is unsatisfying, in that it leaves no room for movement, no sense of advance, of "the glory of going on and still to be." Hence the opposite view

of Eternal Life as a state, if not a place, beyond, to which we look forward as the fulfillment of aspiration.

Here again Jesus is the Truth in its depth, sanity and fullness, in which Eternal Life is both a present reality and a future realization. Even a casual student of his teaching knows what emphasis he laid upon the great emancipating truth of the timeless life as an experience in time. Yet he speaks of going ahead to prepare a "place" for his followers, and promised to return to lead them to it. Eternal Life with him is both a rich possession and a radiant anticipation, and the equal presence of these two elements, held in balance, gave his vision its completeness and finality. At once a treasure and a trophy, if it redeems us from the vicissitudes and cruelties of time, it saves us alike from a restless continuity and a stagnant blessedness. Yea, it delivers us from haunting fear, from warping care, from cramping limitation, no less than from a sense of failing powers and the shadow that waits for every man. It is life in God, eternal in equality but growing in stability and power, and he who knows its secret will face life and death unafraid—

> "Gazing beyond all perishable fears
> To some diviner goal
> Beyond the waste of years."

Christ is Christianity, and his gospel reads the final meaning of life in terms of moral personality

and spiritual character. Its law is love, its method fellowship, its goal character. Its salvation is a Beloved Community, by which we are redeemed from a daily life of selfishness to a life of sympathy, service, sincerity and joy. It sets forth a threefold ideal, namely, a life that in the midst of the work of the day lives in God the Father; a life that reaches forth in fraternal effort with all men of good-will for the common good, at any cost; a life that looks down the long future with a hope that gathers and grows—seeing a shining Figure ever on before.

> "Like you this Christianity or not?
> It may be false, but will you wish it true?
> Has it your vote to be true if it can?"

THE METHOD OF JESUS

PRAYER

O Eternal Love, who hast set us in the heart of Thy eternity, teach us a completer trust in Thee. Unite us with all who serve Thee, and may our fellowship be as a shield against bitter winds and a song in the night. Inspire us with a passion to know Christ, to be united with Him in faith, in purpose, and in obedience. Make us real as He is real, rich in courage and in tenderness, that Thy truth may be in our minds and Thy love in our hearts.

Hear our prayer for one another, and for all whom our hearts remember, each praying for all and all for each one. Minister to the sorrowing, the depressed, the discouraged, the lonely, and those for whom life seems to wind up hill all the way. Have mercy upon any who have followed vain hopes and false values, and feel that life has turned to ashes in their hands. Lead us out of our self-despisings into the liberty of Thy redemptive service.

Wherein we have sinned, do Thou and Thine forgive; and wherein, by word or act, we have hurt any one without knowing it, overcome our evil by Thy good. Strengthen us in our fight with temptation, and make us to know that we are not alone. Let us not lose hope even if we are standing amid the ruin of our happiness, but rise and build again, taking example of Him who went about doing good, in whose service there is joy. In His name, Amen.

THE METHOD OF JESUS

"Jesus, being wearied of his journey, sat thus on the well. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water." John 4:6, 7.

IF we had never read the Life of Jesus before, two things would fill us with wonder as we turned the pages that tell the story of his days. Even the most casual student would be struck by the splendor of his vision of the Kingdom of Heaven, by which he meant nothing else or less than the perfection of man. He did not come to save souls, but to save men. Whether we view it as an individual redemption, or as a social regeneration, it included man in his entire nature—physical, mental, and spiritual—together with the conditions under which he must live. It is a stupendous conception, and only a few of his followers have ever grasped its breadth and depth and grandeur, much less dared to believe it possible. Only twice, in his recorded teaching, did Jesus use the word Church, but he taxed every resource of his marvelous speech to portray his vision of the Kingdom of Heaven as the inevitable goal of human life.

But when we turn from the ruling vision in the mind of Jesus to the activities of his ministry we are faced by a paradox not only surprising, but bewil-

dering. While his teachings anticipate our humanitarian enterprise, at first one looks in vain for any fixed plan, any organized scheme, any definite program in his labors. His acts were so casual, so devoid of the coherence of a definite plan steadily pursued, that we are baffled. "He passed by," is a phrase common in the gospels, and it describes not inaptly the seeming lack of method in his evangelism. He met a Nicodemus here and a Samaritan woman there. One day he was dining with Simon the Pharisee; another he was in the house of Zacchæus the publican. It was all done at haphazard, as if by chance. He was always busy but never in a hurry, and never feverish for results. Of organization he had little, if any, and he seemed to care nothing for machinery. He was a wandering Teacher, a Divine Tramp walking the lanes of Galilee and the hills of Judea apparently with "aimless feet." It is no wonder that John the Baptist, as definite in his method as he was ardent in his temper, had grave misgivings about the method of Jesus.

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; *pray ye,*" said Jesus. We should say organize, agitate, get publicity, make a survey, train workers, at the least hold a mass meeting and arouse the public mind. Such ways of handling a white harvest field are perfectly proper and useful after their kind, but we can not miss the fact that Jesus did not work in that way. If his way seems inefficient to us, there remains the fact that he has done more for the higher life of humanity than all of us put to-

gether. Yet Jesus was so divinely careless that he did not even write his words down. Matthew, John, and even James, wrote memoirs and letters. To Paul, with his glowing mind and virile intellect, this mode of expression was a necessity. But he whom all these confessed to be Master, and whose thoughts have fed the world for two thousand years, never wrote. Never? Yes, once he wrote with his finger in the dust on the floor of the temple porch—words which the first gust of wind would wipe out, or the light step of a barefooted child would erase. Yet he said his words would abide though heaven and earth should pass away!

Surely no one else has ever had such faith in spiritual influences, such trust in ideas. At last we begin to see that One who conceived a world consummation so resplendent, and gave himself with such utter abandon to its realization, was not without a plan. Original in the vastness and character of his design, he was no less original in his method. His originality was the originality of profound simplicity, and his method was so akin to the light, the air, "the blowing clover and the falling rain," that we easily overlook it. In nothing was his greatness more revealed than in his vision of a perfected world to be achieved by means so simple as personal touch, the contagion of character, the leaven of love working from heart to heart; the Divine life mediated by fellowship, fraternity, friendship. From the individual to the multitude, from the center to the circumference, from the changed man to the changed world

—that was the method of Jesus; and it implied a patience the more marvelous in a spirit so ardent and so intense. It is not a little significant that, while the Baptist doubted, the Pharisees, with their astute minds and worldly wisdom, feared the quiet and casual methods of Jesus more than the direct assaults of the Baptist. The gentleness of Jesus was more powerful than the fiery denunciations of John. The Baptist attacked institutions; Jesus laid siege to persons. The remedy of John for social ills was regeneration by baptism, though with stern ethical demands; the remedy of Jesus was the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire—the renewal of the inner man by the healthy, creative forces of the Indwelling Good, the purging fires of Love and the discipline of Joy. Jesus chose to serve mankind by serving men, and his method of friendship and his spirit of fraternal good-will reduced his foes to helpless rage.

There is no need to say that Jesus was a master of his own method, and it is a joy to watch him making use of it. For human interest, for character interest, no novel may ever hope to equal the Gospel narratives in their record not only of the way Jesus dealt with men, but of his skill in discovering and developing personality. Within the circle of his friendship men not only grew stronger than the temptations which had been stronger than they, but they actually seemed to develop new capacities. His apostles, in nowise extraordinary when we first know them, became movers of an inert world, and wrought results such as even men of the greatest genius

seldom attain. "He knew what was in man," is a striking saying, and the truth of it is shown in the insight, the sympathy, the strategy with which he got into the heart or thought of others and did his work. He approached no two persons in the same way, and his method of approach was not drawn from himself—after the manner of the doctrinaire—but from the man whom he was seeking to win. To the guileless Nathanael he opened a vision of descending angels. The yearning John lay upon his bosom, and his words to Peter always matched the character of that impulsive, unstable, but powerful man. He shocked Nicodemus, arraying the pride and self-respect of the man against himself, and secured humility. He asked the rich young ruler to sell all he had and give it to the poor. He did not make that demand of others. He knew his man, and had the young man been willing to give up all Jesus would not have asked him to do it. He wasted no words on the blind Judas. He turned against the Sadducees their own Scriptures, and to those who sat in the seat of Moses he quoted Moses. Thus, either when opposing men, or when seeking to win them, he did it from their own point of view.

The courtesy of Jesus was exquisite, his tact never-failing, and nothing could surpass the delicacy with which he dealt with human souls. He respected the soul, except when it was false, and then he blasted its hypocrisy with bolts of wrath. The poor, pitiful sinner, caught in the coil of passion or driven by demon desires, he treated as one treats a

sick child. But he never intruded, never buttonholed men and asked about their souls. Where there was no interest in spiritual things, no token of need, he was silent; to force the issue, he said, was casting pearls before swine.

But where there was the slightest sign of yearning desire he was all aglow with sympathy and joy, watching the awakening as a gardener watches the opening of a bud. He had a keen eye for these hints of inner unrest, as witness his dealing with the woman of Samaria. By chance, as we say, weary of his journey, Jesus sat on the well of Jacob, and a woman came to draw water. It was not the usual hour for frequenting the well, but she was a woman in whose life there was little order—as little care for hours as for morals—since confusion in the larger matters of life is apt to mean carelessness in details. Perhaps, too, she came at noon, instead of in the morning or evening, as was the custom, in order to avoid the eyes that looked on her askance. Shame was not dead in her heart, and that fact, made known in some glance or act, Jesus detected. Quite unconsciously she betrayed a soul ready for words of truth and hope, else Jesus would not have spoken to her at all. There were some whom he left, not, indeed, uncared for or untaught, but to the tutelage of their own chosen courses. This woman was deep enough in the mire, but she hated it—perhaps had never loved it—and he saw that she was capable of rescue.

How tactful Jesus was as a teacher! No doubt

the woman had come to the well in a listless mood, or somewhat cast down by the burden of an ill-regulated life. She must first be interested, aroused, and Jesus piqued her curiosity in a simple, natural manner. He was thirsty, and asked her for a drink, laying himself under obligation to her kindness. There they stood—yet how far apart—on a common plane, her moral nature set in action by a simple act of service to a stranger. Jesus further deepened her interest by disarming her prejudice. He was a Jew, she a Samaritan, and the two peoples had no dealings, much less would they eat or drink together. She, poor soul, would hardly have accepted a cup of water from his hand! She could not despise him because he did not despise her. She could only wonder. Jesus went on to quicken her curiosity in regard to himself by talking of water in a way first to tease her with a sense of absurdity, and then to open a door into a dim sense of great good. Before he was aware of it he had lifted her into the midst of the loftiest and most mysterious truths. Did she understand? Perhaps not; but by baffling thought he provoked thought, and having enlisted both her interest and her wondering, he probed softly into her moral life.

If Jesus had accused the woman of sin, he might have provoked denial and driven her angry away. He was too gentle, too wise, too delicate to do either. Instead he led her on by an indirect path to self-accusation, at the same time showing her that he had a knowledge of her history equal to her own. In

that moment his victory was complete. She bowed to him as a prophet. When we meet one who knows more than ourselves, one who is greater and wiser and better, we either humbly yield or angrily resist. But the woman did not wish to think about her poor, sinful life. Who does? So she quickly shifted the subject to the national religious issue. Gerizim or Jerusalem, which is the right place to worship in? Jesus did not draw her back to herself, but indulged her vain question; answered it, indeed, by lifting her away from idle debate into a more revealing insight. He refused to be entangled in the details of a minor issue, knowing, as we need to learn, that it is the great truths and the large issues that inspire and save. Worship, he said, is not a matter of the place, but of the Presence. Jesus never talked down to the human soul; he lifted it up. Often he taught things not understood, but which have the power to awe and surprise, as if to show not only the facts but the possibilities and affinities of the life of the spirit.

Let us never forget that it was to a wayward woman by the well-side that Jesus uttered those eternal words which have been chanted in the faith of all ages. "God is spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Here, surely, is the loftiest, noblest word that ever found utterance on earth and among men. God seeking worshipers—what a conception! Yet it is true to the genius of Jesus, who everywhere shows us, not man seeking God, but God seeking man. Of course

the poor woman of the street did not fathom his word. Nor do we. Never yet has His church learned that the creed of Jesus is not assent to a form of words, but consent to a way of life. Renan was right. In this word Jesus became a universal teacher. His word is a definition of God and a description of worship. It sweeps away idolatry and makes truth, reality, and spiritual fellowship the path to God. The temple is nothing, the form is nothing; the spirit is everything. Such things were too deep and difficult for the woman at the well, but she knew that when the Messiah appeared he would make all things plain. Imagine her surprise when she heard the words: "I that speak unto thee am he!" The Messiah, awaited by Jew and Samaritan alike, and she—the first of her people—had given him a drink of water and heard his great message! Dropping her pitcher, she ran back into the village, from which she had come a woman of shame, now an angel of annunciation.

Such was the method of Jesus, and if it seems casual and unorganized the facts do not show that we have improved on it. Indeed, a fatal error lies in wait to defeat much of our effort, in that we think of men in the mass and try to save them by wholesale. It can not be done. Jesus, too, aimed at the mass, but he did not lose himself in the vastness of his aim, much less lay aside the simplicity of his method of reaching mankind through men. To-day we have plans, schemes and programs a plenty, but they do not work for lack of the personal touch, the

quickening power, the creative faith. Propaganda seems well-nigh to have taken the place of evangelism, and one detects in that fact a loss of faith in spiritual appeals. In the life of the spirit size does not signify. Numbers do not count. Money is not important. No amount of machinery can bring new visions, new leaders, and the new spirit. Two or three and Jesus are worth more than an army raising funds and trying to manipulate public opinion into a Christian mood. Some of us feel deeply that the Church will be less than it is, both in numbers and in power, before it enters upon a new era of inspiration, and that if it is to find a way out of the present *impasse* it must learn again the method of the Master.

Nor is that all. If this were a study of the method of Jesus in the days of his flesh, and nothing more, it would not touch us deeply. But it is a simple fact—attested by radiant experience—that Jesus can do for us to-day what he did for men and women in the long ago, and by the same method of friendship. This is not a mere sentiment, much less a fancy. It is an authentic law of the life of faith. Indeed, it is the same law by which we learn from any of the masters, interpreters, and deliverers of humanity. Years ago I knew an old man on a farm who had read Shakespeare, lived with him, and brooded over his words, until he had entered into the mysterious largeness and tenderness of his mind; for the mind of Shakespeare is a thing as distinct and lovely as a symphony by Beethoven or a statue by

Phidias. Sitting under a great tree in his front yard, my old friend seemed like Prospero in his victory through self-surrender and his wisdom of forgiveness. Just so there is a way of thinking and living —a habit of mind and of life—by which we may enter into the mind, the spirit, and, it may be, into the faith of Jesus. Surely, if there be any habit of discipline, any method of self-culture, by which we may keep our souls alive unto God, much less walk again with Jesus in this ambiguous and seducing world, we are unwise to neglect it.

How can we do it? There comes to mind a scene in an early, little known biography of Wordsworth, by Symington, now long out of print, which may help me to make this matter plain. At a village post office one morning the poet met a young man on his way to college, and they fell to talking of college life and its perils. The grave and kindly poet—looking like a Priest of Nature—spoke of the religious side of college life in a manner which the youth never forgot. Years later he remembered the simple diction, the thoughtful good sense, and the deep earnestness with which the poet talked of these intimate matters, and especially his distrust of highly wrought religious excitement in youth. The safest training for the mind in religion, he thought, is to think about Jesus, to ponder his words, his life, his character. *"Work it into your thoughts,"* he said, *"into your imagination, make it a real presence in the mind."* Here is real wisdom, of which we need only to make practical use, putting habit on the side of the highest

life; and to that end let me drop a hint given me at a time when it was sorely needed, long since become not only a habit but a joy in the midst of the years.

Twenty years ago an honored and dear teacher told, quite casually and simply, how he was wont to read the Life of Jesus. Each day he took one passage, one scene, and read it slowly, intently, pondering its words, and reproducing in his mind the details of its vivid human color, until he could hear the voice of the Master when he spoke, and see his gesture when he put forth his hand to heal. Try it, using every aid at your command, and it will become the happiest and most fruitful habit of your life. As you walk with him in the wonder and awe of his life long ago, living over its scenes in your heart, somehow, in a way no one may describe, he will draw near and walk with you in this strange and tangled time. Words were not made to speak of such matters, but for us to-day, no less than in days far gone, life may be a walk to Emmaus, its daily bread a sacrament, and its eventide an hour of revelation. A deep-hearted poet knew whereof he wrote:

"Loud mockers in the roaring street
Say Christ is crucified again:
Twice pierced his gospel-bearing feet,
Twice broken his great heart in vain.

"I hear, and to myself I smile,
For Christ talks with me all the while.

"No more unto the stubborn heart
With gentle knocking shall he plead,
No more the mystic pity start,
For Christ twice dead is dead indeed.

"So in the street I hear men say,
Yet Christ is with me all the day."

THE GOSPEL OF HIS LIFE

PRAYER

Eternal Father, we thank Thee for a faith so high that it can link the far-off pilgrim stars with the cradle of a Little Child. Teach us that no hope vouchsafed to the human soul is too high, too holy, to be fulfilled by Thy love and power. Lift up our hearts this day and make us to know that the world is too small for the soul and its dreams. May we be faithful to Thy Morning Star by which we are led out of phantoms into realities!

Make us truly wise, with the wisdom of a Little Child, that the highest truth may be born in our hearts, shepherded by Love and Joy and Wonder. May we be brave to seek and faithful to find Thy truth—we who live in cynical days and need to keep close to the warm heart of life. Call us back from a wisdom that is not wise, because it is hard, untrustful, and doubtful of those starry ideals by which Thou art revealed.

Drive back the gray shadows which the years have cast over us, and let us see Thy guiding Star and hear a music not of earth. Let not our souls be busy Inns that have no room for Thee and Thine, but homes of prayer and praise, ready for Thy welcoming. Make us to know that near us, even in our city, is Christ the Saviour, whom seeking with joy, we shall find. Humbly we offer our Christmas prayer in his name. Amen.

THE GOSPEL OF HIS LIFE

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Romans 5:10.

HERE are the two hemispheres of our Christian thought and faith—reconciliation to God by death of the Christ, and salvation by his life. For, if the death of Jesus unveils the oneness of God with man, his life shows us the way whereby man becomes one with God—the Way home, the Truth that sets us free, and the Life that is eternal. Hence the atonement, the way of Divine Union, at once the inspiration and goal of all religion and of all life. It is the return of our prodigal humanity to God the Father, whose yearning sorrow was made known in the tragedy of the Cross—like an alabaster box of ointment broken, revealing the ineffable tenderness hidden behind the hardness of the world.

Only, if we would know the truth as it is in Jesus—its breadth, beauty, and richness—we must put two ideas out of our minds forever as unworthy of the Mind of Christ. Not once does Jesus suggest, even by inference, that God is angry with humanity, and must be placated, appeased, or reconciled before He can or will forgive our wrongdoing. Such an idea is alien to the spirit and faith of Jesus, to whom

God is not a Judge to be placated, but a Father whose love never tires, never tarries, never forgets, never fails. Unhappily, the old pagan idea of propitiation—born of fear—was imported into Christian thought, and darkened our faith for ages; but we may now rejoice that it is fading away as we come nearer to the vision of God in Christ. Let us give thanks that we are in the dawn of a day when no theology will wear the name Christian save that taught by Jesus and fragrant with his spirit—a theology revealed in sun-bright parables, in sermons on the hillside and by the sea, using the simple, homely things of everyday life to make known the friendly righteousness and unfailing love of God.

Nor must we think of the atoning work of God as something which began at a definite date in time and was finished long ago, as if God began to love man in the days of Jesus. Far from it. The life of God, by His very nature, is an eternal life of love and reconciliation, and Christ is our Redeemer because in a unique sense he is the Revealer of what God was, is, and ever shall be. Just as the Incarnation was "the climax of Immanence in the world," as Illingworth used to say, so Calvary was the climax, and therefore the revelation, of an age-long process of atonement, ever going on in a world where God is always present, always suffering, always triumphing over evil. Against this large background of the Eternal Atonement—this vision of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"—let us think, first and briefly, of the death of Christ, and then,

with more emphasis, as befits our theme, of the Gospel of his life.

Perhaps no one who witnessed the Crucifixion saw any theology in it, much less dreamed of the depths beyond depths of meaning in that scene which the Christian ages have discovered. It was a scene of physical horror, relieved only by the moral heroism and spiritual loveliness of One who was faithful to his faith even unto death. No one, standing by, would ever have foreseen that such a scene, so ghastly and so pathetic, was destined to become the master light of the profoundest spiritual revelation, and a place of healing. Others, like Jeremiah and Socrates, to name no more—many others, in fact, before and since—have suffered death for truth and for humanity; but no other death, so far as we have record, has become a theology. Why should it be so? Why should the New Testament, and after it ages of Christian thought, devote so much attention to the death of Jesus, as if dropping plummet after plummet into the mystery, yet unable to fathom it? Even if we cast all theories of the Atonement aside as inadequate—as we well may do—the profound fact which they tried to explain remains.

Whatever be the explanation, the fact is that very early, and ever since—for ages of exposition have not exhausted the richness of the discovery—first by a certain instinct, no doubt, and then by redeeming experience, men found in the death of Jesus such a disclosure of the forgiving love and cleansing pity of God as enabled them to venture their souls

upon Him. Probably no one will ever fashion an explanation either of the historical fact or the spiritual experience, but it remains a fact that fills one with wonder beyond words. Here men heard an answer to that old, haunting *De Profundis* as it echoes in Vedic hymns, in penitential Psalms from yonder side of the Pyramids, no less than in the literature that has been influenced by Hebrew thought—a mysterious sense of sin and a cry for the mercy of God. As buried civilizations yield up their treasures, that cry is heard without need of sound or language; and those mute altars—where, often, human sacrifices were offered—find their fulfillment in Christ—as St. Ignatius would say, in God the one Sanctuary and Christ the "one Altar."

Deep knowledge of the human heart lies behind those crude doctrines of the Atonement; the knowledge out of which the Psalmist wrote, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Kipling represents the noble Lama of Tibet as a pilgrim seeking the River which washed away sins, and another tells of a poor Korean woman who came out of the country district to one of the towns, asking all she met to guide her to "the place where they heal the broken heart"—which things are parables of our humanity in its moral agony, of which each of us finds the interpretation in his own heart. Emerson dreamed of a Church founded on moral science, as sunny as a Greek temple, the shrine of jubilant and beholding

souls. If such a Church should be erected—bare at first, he said, but at last gathering to itself the colors of art and the rhythm of music—there would still be need of a Gothic chapel near by for the wounded and world-broken, who are neither jubilant nor beholding. The bitter necessity remains, and it is fact that men have found in Christ, and through him that in God which heals the heart of the old malady of sin—restoring the soul and leading into the paths of a new life.

Even so, there are those who say that the death of Christ has been emphasized out of all proportion, to the neglect of the Gospel of his life. The error is, however, not that the importance of the Cross has been exaggerated—that could hardly be—but that the life of Christ, as a way of spiritual realization and attainment, has not been emphasized enough. St. Paul, in the text, kept the two in balance, telling us, first, as we can not too often remind ourselves, that the reconciliation described is that of man to God, and not of God to man; and second, that salvation follows reconciliation, and is effected not by the death of Christ, but by his life. That is to say, the Atonement of Christ is not simply something done for us long ago, but something that he seeks to do in us now; not only a change in our relation to God, but also a change in ourselves, in our inner attitude, motive and character—bringing us into oneness with the spirit and will of the Father. Nor can we realize our reconciliation to God—which means a healing of that inner discord which

torments us, dividing us against ourselves—until we take the whole Gospel for our deliverance and guidance. For, in the nature of things, our redemption is not something transacted outside of ourselves, but Christ formed in us the hope of glory, transforming our personality, enduing us with purity and power, and making us masters of the handicaps that thwart us.

To-day no one can read the signs of the time without discerning a shifting of emphasis to the Gospel of the Life of Christ, and here lies the hope of religion and of the world in the future. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do* not the things which I say?" and hearing that rebuke we know that he is a Leader not simply to be admired, or even worshiped, but to be obeyed and followed. It is not enough to bow down to the winsomeness of his personality; we must grasp the spirit and principles of his life as the law and method whereby we may have life, and have it more abundantly. Forever his challenge stands: "If any man would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." When we actually respond to that challenge, take up our burdens in his faith and bear them in his spirit, then we are living the Gospel of his life, comrades with him in his heroic errand, partners, after our little measure, in his atoning life, fellow-workers for the redemptive making of a new humanity. For Atonement, as the word means, is Identification, oneness with Christ in the purpose and passion of his life, whereby we realize our oneness with God.

The old dogmatic, formalistic Christianity has collapsed, and is ready for the scrap heap. Everywhere men are in revolt against it, because it is ineffective, inadequate, unreal. It lacks both vitality and validity in that it seeks security, not adventure—jam, not dynamite—and tries to use Jesus instead of being used by him, reading his Gospel in a magical, partial, individual sense rather than in its spiritual, social and complete sense. Our Christianity, if it is to win the homage of heroic spirits—or redeem to heroism those who have failed—must be full-orbed, deep-rooted, and radiant; a practical mysticism fertile alike in creative personality and social ministry. Christianity is not a reminiscence; it is a revolution. It means a new heart, a new personality, a new valuation of life; a New Creation, to use the phrase of St. Paul—and, therefore, a new social order wherein dwelleth righteousness and good-will. The new Christianity must recover the whole Gospel, not simply that Christ died, but that *he is alive,* demanding of us the same love, the same loyalty, the same heroic adventure as he required of those who followed him in the days of his flesh; as real and commanding to-day as when

> He walked here, the shadow of him love,
> The speech of him soft music, and his step
> A benediction.

For by the life of Christ we mean not only his way of living, but also the faith-producing, life-building power that is in him, whereby he remakes

men in his own likeness. Here again we have to do not with theory, but with fact. No fact could be better attested, as for example by Wesley in the Aldersgate Street chapel "about a quarter before nine" on the evening of May 24, 1738. He met Christ, and thereafter he was a free man, a new man, a man of power, and his ministry, hitherto almost a failure, became one of the miraculous forces in the history of England. Examples are without number of how, by fellowship with Christ, men not only grow stronger than the sin which once was stronger than they, but actually seem to develop new capacities of insight, endurance, and achievement. Within the circle of his friendship the men selected to be his apostles—in no wise extraordinary, as we first know them—became movers of an inert world, and wrought results such as even men of the greatest genius seldom attain. Such power is in Christ, and it is the need of all needs to-day, if we are to have a new world, and not simply an old world patched up and plastered over. "In him was life," and

> 'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
> More life, and fuller, that I want.

Not otherwise may we hope to follow Christ in his way of living, for it is an impossible undertaking if we have not his enduement of power and the fellowship of His presence. By living that life, of course, is not meant a slavish imitation of its outward habit—its turban and tunic, and its career as a

homeless teacher—but that we shall take into our tasks, of whatever kind, his faith in God, his love of man, and the spirit and temper in which he wrought. Anyway, by as much as we do follow him in his life of love, by so much do we realize our reconciliation with God, and to the same degree is revealed our oneness with humanity. They are in truth "one grace" as McLeod Campbell said in his noble book on the Atonement—still a classic—one golden sentence of which comes to mind: "If we refuse to be in Christ the brothers of men, we can not be in Christ the sons of God." The two are inseparably related, since to say that God is our Father is also to say that men are our brethren. Such is the Gospel of his life by which we are saved: the Fatherly Love and the Brotherly Life; love turning to God in joy and peace, and manward in sorrow for his sin and anguish for his misery.

For the rest, let us remember that when we speak of the living Christ and his fellowship, we mean that the Love which dwelt here long ago in the Life of Jesus—revealing itself in a face the kindest ever seen, a voice the most haunting, a hand never lifted save in blessing, and a heart of unfailing pity—is the Love which holds us evermore in its benign embrace, thinking for us, planning for us, seeking to fulfill its will in our lives.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
  Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in thee the fatherhood
  And heart of God revealed.

The homage that we render thee
  Is still our Father's own;
No jealous claim or rivalry
  Divides the Cross and Throne.

"HE WENT A LITTLE FARTHER"

PRAYER

Eternal Father, from everlasting to everlasting Thy love endures; from age to age Thy mercy abides. Thy goodness fails not, Thy truth groweth not old. Yea, Thou art the sky above and the river-bed below the flow of our mortal years, giving worth and meaning to our fleeting lives.

Purify our prayer, O Lord, with the breadth of Thy sanctity; take all stains from our hearts, all darkness from our minds. Grant us earnestly to covet the things that make for health of soul, to search them out wisely, to know them truly, and to fulfill them faithfully. Order our life, our thought, our deepest desire, so that we may seek that which cannot be lost, enjoying all else as a loan to be used in the work of the day.

Thou hast set in our hearts a dream of life without futility, of faith without fear, of freedom without folly. Yet, somehow, we have not attained it. We go so far, and falter and fail. Lack of courage, lack of faith, lack of one last uttermost self-surrender, keeps us back. Arise Thou within our hearts as strength and healing and victory, overcoming all confusion of purpose, all haunting failure, all self-love that keeps us from the larger life of love to which Thou callest us.

Humbly we offer our prayer, asking nothing for ourselves that we do not ask for all whom our hearts remember, all who struggle and aspire to a nobler life. Day by day may we grow in faith, in charity, in the tranquillity of a settled hope, and more than all in that purity of spirit by which we may see Thee. May our sorrows be teachers, our disappointments revelations, and our temptations helpers toward the life that is life indeed. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

"HE WENT A LITTLE FARTHER"

"He went a little farther." Matt. 26:39.

THESE simple words have hidden in them, parabolically at least, the secret of the Life of Jesus. Rising from the table of the Holy Supper in the upper room, he passed into the streets of the sleeping city, the farewell hymn still echoing in his heart. Crossing the brook Kidron, he entered the Garden of Gethsemane, which lay at the foot of Mount Olivet. All his disciples, save three, he left at the entrance of the Garden, and they had not gone very far when he bade even the chosen three remain where they were, while he went a little farther into the shadows of the olive trees. There, alone, the cup of agony was pressed to his lips; there he met the final onset of temptation; there he wrestled with God and triumphed by self-surrender. Had he failed to take that last, lonely step into the solitude, he would not now be the leader and way-shower of humanity.

Here is a parable in which, if we have insight, we may read the heroic secret of the life and redeeming leadership of Jesus. He did everything in the superlative degree; he went beyond others. He went farther than any one else in his faith in God and in man, farther in his vision of redemption; farther

into the depths of sorrow and the heights of joy; farther in his use of prayer and along the way of duty. Always it was so, alike in his life and in his teaching. When one came to tell him that a little girl was ill and asked him to come, he went at once. Then another came and told him that she was dead, but he went on. Equally so in his teaching. If Moses forbade murder and adultery, Jesus went farther and forbade the heart of hate and the lustful look. He asks us to take it for granted that God is good—if only because we, at our best, are good—but he makes us feel that the love of God has meanings and prophecies which we have never dreamed, much less explored. Such was his habit, and even on his sunset walk to Emmaus in the falling daylight "he made as though he would have gone farther."

Every leader, of course, goes a little farther than his fellows, and, as Cromwell once said, "The men who go farthest are those who know not where they are going"—that is, because they are moved by Divine impulsion. Luther was not the only man of his age who saw the need of reform. There was at least another, an abler scholar, a man of larger culture and richer refinement, who saw no less clearly the crying need of the time. But Erasmus was cautious, compromising, moderate, seeking always the middle course. Luther, bolder, more heroic, more Christ-like, went farther, saying: "Here stand I, God help me, I can do no other." As Carlyle said, "Had Luther in that moment done other, it had all been otherwise." For the prophecy of Eng-

lish Puritanism, of the French Revolution, of the uprising of democracy, of the old world and the new—the germ of it all—lay in that forward step.

Here, no less, is the secret of all discovery. Lord Kelvin has told us that he first gathered all available facts, then brooded over them, until, at last, to use his words, his mind "took a mortal leap out beyond anything that any one had ever demonstrated," and found the truth—found it because he went a little farther. How many fail in this quest for lack of that last step. They go to the very door of the truth and stop, smitten by some strange hesitancy, some inward shrinking, and do not arrive. Sir Oliver Lodge has told us how near we are to vast, unguessable sources of energy—on the eve, it may be, of unpredictable disclosures—if only we go a little farther and lay hold of the secret. For there is truth ahead—always truth ahead—truth so amazing as to be unbelievable, and it will be revealed to us when we are willing to receive it, revelation being the Divine side of discovery. He is wise who keeps an open mind and a tender heart, waiting for the new light to break forth from the written and the unwritten Word of God, which liveth for ever.

Jesus was the great discoverer of spiritual truth, by virtue of his insight, but no less by reason of his experience and his character—and, let us add, his fearlessness in going farther than others. He, too, gathered the finest insights of the race, brooded over them, and then passed beyond to a completer synthesis, to the higher unity of things which differ.

Nothing is more amazing than the insight of Jesus, so calm, so clear, as direct as a ray of light, going at once and always to the central, significant thing involved—as witness his replies to his critics. His mind seemed to be a magnet which attracted only those truths which are vital, eternal, creative, and when he saw a truth he made trial of it. Thus was wrought "the creed of creeds," experience attesting and confirming insight, and next to the wonder of his vision was the richness of his experience of eternal things. Truly he could say, "Whoso wills to do the will of my Father shall know," and his experience is at once a revelation and a challenge to us.

Take his faith in God, which is the sovereign fact in his life and thought. Others had taught that God is righteous, and that He demands righteousness of the sons of men. Psalmist and prophet had said that like as a father pities his children, so God pities those who fear Him. But Jesus went farther, beyond the similitude to the reality, and said, not that God is like a father, but that He is a Father; not of a few men of elect valor and intelligence, but of all that wear our human shape—the leper by the wayside, the harlot on the street, the thief on the cross. As the founder of the City Temple Church said, almost three hundred years ago, "Jesus was the greatest and best believer that ever lived." In his faith—nay, more, in his experience—the love of God lights up the world like a sunrise, showing us that sin and misery are intruders and have no right to be. Not yet has the longest reach of Christian thought

touched the circumference of his faith in God, the Father everlasting. Once we hold his faith, nothing will be impossible except depression and dismay. Indeed, if we have the courage to go a little farther in his shining path, he will lead us into a new world of discovery of God, immeasurably more wonderful than we have yet imagined.

Take his faith in man, his love of man. Time out of mind teachers have exhorted their fellows to love one another, but Jesus went farther and did it. As some one has said, "The greatest honor that humanity has ever had done to it was that Jesus loved it so well." Who ever had such love of man—all men, poor, rich, wise, foolish, clean, unclean, saintly, sinful, pieces of men, and those who had once been men—yet with none of the weakness of love, none of its delusions, none of its softness? No one ever saw more clearly than Jesus the folly, the vanity, the sly cunning and gross selfishness of man—as we know from his parables—yet to whom have men ever been so unutterably sacred! It must be hard for a man with a New Testament in his hand to be a cynic. There is a spirit, a faith, a love—aye, and much else—which rebukes all the cynicism to which we are tempted. For Jesus went farther than others into the nature of man—down below all tinsel robes or foul sins—and found something infinitely lovely. Out of a world full of tyrannies, rancors, bitter memories, and fanatical narrowness there arose this life of loving-kindness, this Revealer of the truth that makes us free—the

friendliest and wisest Figure of all the sons of men, whose lyric love of humanity is the gentlest influence felt among men.

No wonder, when men came to him under the shame of moral defeat, he sent them away feeling that it could never happen again—his faith in them giving them faith in God and in themselves. No wonder he has such power in prayer, setting no limit to its efficacy. Indeed, his words in respect to prayer —and still more his practice of it—fill one with awe. It can throw hindering mountains into the sea, he said: it can feed the hungry, heal the sick, and even raise the dead. Yea, it can change the intractable hearts of men, lifting them out of weakness into power, out of weariness into rest. Not yet have we realized, much less attained to, such heights. Let us not say that it is impossible; for if we had such faith as his, such love, such daring adventure upon God, no doubt it would all be as simple and natural as breathing. Here, again, let us keep an open mind and a responsive heart, if so be that we may advance a little way toward what is our right and privilege as citizens of the Kingdom of Spirit.

Once more; in nothing was the vision of Jesus more revolutionary than in its revelation of the future life. Since ever time began men have believed in a life after death, but nearly always it has been thought of as a mere prolongation of the present life, or else as a pale attenuated survival of it, always unsatisfactory, and often repulsive. Not so Jesus, to whom the Great Other Life, about which

we can not help wondering—doubly so now, because of the young and happy who have entered it through the red gates of war—will be better than all our imaginings. Mere survival may be a horrible thing, too ghastly to contemplate, as in the old oriental Wheel of Life. Immortality is one thing; Eternal Life is another. What Jesus saw, and what in our best hours we forefeel, is that there is a life which releases us from this unresting continuity; an achievement which, without condemning us to stagnant blessedness, yet redeems us from the vicissitudes and cruelties of time. It means much that we are able to conceive of such a fruition of eternity, and, in dross-drained hours, to "touch it," as Monica and Augustine did in their moment of ecstasy at Ostia. Jesus went far beyond any one else here, showing us, both in his faith and in his life, that the real life of the spirit transcends the physical order and its limitations; that there is indeed a "realm of ends" which gives meaning to our tangled paths.

Now this principle of going "a little farther" has very practical meanings for each of us. Remember, it was in an hour of sorrow, of dire agony—such sorrow as fills us with awed fear—that Jesus went a little farther along his solitary way. For us, too, in our lesser degree, there come times when we must walk alone; times when, as Carlyle said, the world with its loud trafficking retires into the distance and we are face to face with the Infinite. There is ever an inner circle of friends who can follow us farther than others, like the three disciples of Jesus in the

Garden. But even they must be left behind. Death, and things worse than death, leave us in a great solitude. It is, indeed, impossible to live long in this world without learning something of the inevitableness of human partings and the loneliness which they cast over us. In all partings, said Mark Rutherford, there is something of the infinite. But we must go on, somehow, and he is wise who follows the Man of Sorrows in the Garden, for, a little farther on, if we are brave and patient, we shall find ministering spirits to comfort and help.

When Henry Drummond spoke to the students of Harvard he took for his text the words of Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," and all his emphasis was on the word *first*. Two kinds of persons, he said, may be happy in this world: those who have never entered the Christian life, and those who, having entered it, go all the way. The first are untroubled by such matters, finding their satisfaction in the culture of the intellect, in the quest of power, or in the gratification of the sense. The second are happy because of a single-hearted devotion and dedication to the highest. But if you want to be miserable, said Drummond, be a "half-way Christian," and those words, I fear, describe most of us. We love Jesus. We feel the fascination of his moral loveliness, his faith in humanity, and his love of God. We are drawn after him irresistibly, but we draw back from going all the way. We have not the courage. We can not go back and be happy; we fear

to go on. Hence we are miserable, faltering and troubled of heart.

The company of those who follow Jesus fitfully and afar off is very large, and it is a wistful fellowship. The young ruler who came to the Master, but who would not forego his great possessions; the lawyer to whom the Master said, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God"—these are examples of how men are held back by some base love or fear of the world, or a too great attachment to the things that pass away. How many men, having made that same refusal—not openly, perhaps, but none the less actually—might sadly say:

> "Just a few steps more
> And there might have dawned on me,
> Blue, infinite, the sea."

But no; they turned back just where they should have gone a little farther. There is a deep wistfulness in the hearts of men and women to-day; a yearning to believe, to know, to find a home in the eternal, yet they hesitate to take the last step.

What is the "little farther" by which we enter the Kingdom of God? It is the willingness to sacrifice the material, if need be, for the sake of the spiritual. In the imagery of Jesus, it is to sell all one has and buy the pearl of great price; to pluck out the eye or cut off the hand that offends; to believe, and act on the belief, that nothing is worth having at the cost of Christ. In short, it asks for one last act

of utter surrender to the highest, and until we do that there is no promise of inner unity. All the masters of the spiritual life agree that such a final dedication is the secret of peace and power. Often, no doubt, you have been near to making it, but did not. Something held you back. The little more, how much it is; the little less, and what worlds away. Make the step now, to-day, and it will be a new day in the history of your inner life.

> "Yield only up His price, your heart,
> Into God's loving hold;
> He turns, with heavenly alchemy,
> Your lead of life to gold."

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JESUS

PRAYER

Eternal God, together we bow in the hush and joy of Thy presence, folk of many families united in our need and quest of Thy revealing grace. Together we confess our sins; together we lift up our hearts in the ancient adoring habit of our race. Thou art the meaning of our pathetic and inscrutable mortality; and we pray that our faith in Thee, from a dim and haunting dream, may rise as a radiant vision to light the way of duty, of service, and of hope. Make our worship a cleansing of heart and a consecration of purpose.

Lord, we asked to see Thy divinity, and Thou hast shown us Thy humanity; we sought Thy eternity, and Thou hast revealed Thyself in a life like our own. Teach us to read the meaning of our fleeting lives in the light of Thy eternal life, that, walking by faith, we may be partakers of Thy divinity, as Thou art a sharer of our humanity. Lift us out of ourselves into the joy of communion; save us from the misery of a fetterless freedom, and make us fellow-workers with Thy unfolding purpose of good-will.

Thou Forgiver of sin, Healer of sorrow, Vanquisher of death, draw us to Thyself, who art our salvation and our all-conquering hope. Make us citizens of Thy kingdom, men of invincible good-will, builders of a world where righteousness shall reign, and the law of love shall triumph over hate and strife. Make a new beginning in our hearts, and in the troubled heart of humanity; mingle the peoples of earth in an alchemy of friendship, and with the breath of Thy Spirit create in us a new mind. In His name, Amen.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JESUS

"That the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." 2 Cor. 4:11.

"Ye are the letters of Jesus, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God." 2 Cor. 3:3.

VICTOR HUGO was wont to say, in his daring and eloquent manner, that the history of humanity is the Biography of God. Yet when we look up into the sky at night and think of those uncounted systems greater than our own, as science has unveiled them—depth beyond depth, silent and far-shining—the story of man seems hardly more than a tiny footnote in the Divine Memoirs. The humility and wonder of the Psalmist was nearer the truth when, after his meditation in the night-time, he asked: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" At least the history of man can be no more than a chapter in the Book of the Acts of God, a chapter the real meaning of which can be known only when it is read in the vast context of the volume.

All literary critics will agree, for once, that the page of the human story where the light is clearest, the style most perfect, the rhythm most haunting, is that which tells of the Life of Jesus in the days of his flesh. The Life of Jesus—there faith and fact

meet, the ideal and the real join, time and eternity blend! And the record is worthy of the reality, alike in its simplicity, its dignity, its beauty, and its power. Thucydides is not more lucid, more restrained, or more austere in his economy of adjectives. There is no word of eulogy, no laying on of colors, no rhetoric. The overwhelming impression is one not only of vividness, but of veracity, and it is no wonder that it remains after all the ages as the one supreme, everlasting Book. To read it through, as a poet has said, is to know the pathos of all perfect things, a fabric of the spirit, having deep foundations resting upon the final nature of things, and Norman towers of solid sense, and pinnacles like cries and songs and prayers—all built upon a look on the face of Jesus, a tone in his voice, a faith in his heart, a love in his life!

Yet how meager is our record of Jesus—only four tiny tracts, so brief that they could all be printed in one issue of a daily paper. Besides, as they stand, many things are told over and over again in two of the Gospels, some in three, and a few in all four. Set against the fullness of that Life in its tireless activity, how brief the record is! We read of days when he was too busy to eat. From dawn till dusk he was teaching his disciples, teaching the multitudes, talking to some single soul that needed him, and healing the ills of body and mind. And when the long day was over he took his rest in hours of prayer. Behind his ministry lay almost thirty years in which we have only one or two glimpses of him

when he was a babe and a boy. How we should like to know the story of those silent years. All that we have is a series of scenes and sayings from his three short years of public ministry—not biographies in our modern sense, but reminiscences woven together with artless art, conveying, as no other book on earth, the living presence of a Personality.

Three swift and gentle years, and yet what richness, and abundance, and beauty of life he poured into them! In closing his record St. John tells us that he has set down only a small part of what Jesus did and said, and that if all were written down the world would not be large enough to hold the books. As we turn the page, it happens that the verse next following this statement is the preface to the Acts of the Apostles, in which Luke tells us that in the first volume of his work—meaning his Gospel—he had made record of what Jesus "*began* to do and teach" up to the day when his disciples saw him for the last time. Began! There we have it at last—his life in the days of his flesh, with all its teeming richness of activity, was only the beginning of the Life of Jesus. Plainly the suggestion of Luke is that the Acts of the Apostles is a record, not so much of what the Apostles did, but of what Jesus went on doing in them and through them, even when his visible presence was withdrawn.

So, then, if we had a full record of the Life of Jesus when he walked in the flesh, showing him in habit as he lived—how he ate, worked, slept, talked, and looked, his gesture of appeal and his joy-giving

smile—it would not be a complete life. Here is one biography that does not end in the grave, with an appendix containing the funeral sermon. No, it is an unfinished life, still a-writing, and the last page will not be written until the Kingdom of God has come and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. If we had the insight to tell the real story of Jesus, and the art to trace his influence upon the life of man, what a record it would be! Indeed, if such a record were possible, the saying of St. John would not seem an exaggeration when he said that the world could not contain the books. Most men, whether they will or no, think of Jesus less as a figure in the past than as an eternal contemporary.

No one else who has walked this earth has such an unending biography. Buddha, Plato, Plutarch, and "the great old saints of other ages" are lovingly honored, as they should be by all who love virtue. But how dim is the light that shows us their figures, and how far off they seem as we look at them through the mist of years. With Jesus it is "different," as Matthew Arnold said. Here is something more than mere memory—like the faded, yellow letters of one much loved and long dead—something more than an influence "in defusion ever more intense;" something more living, more compelling, more inward, more personal, as ages of Christian experience testify. What a chapter in "that unfinished life that shapes the world" is the record of the lives of the saints in their fellowship with the living Christ, only a few pages of which have been written.

It is all summed up in the saying of Luther: "We are nothing; Christ is all;" or in the words of Browning:

> "That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows."

Phillips Brooks made the influence of Jesus upon the life of humanity the theme of a series of noble lectures; so did David Swing. Yet how much remained unsaid, how much unaccounted for even by their eloquence. A book is being written, it may be, though not with human hands, recording the larger Life of Jesus, but it will be read only in the library of Heaven. Much as we rejoice in the growing life of Jesus, whose pages are being written before our eyes in the slow incarnation of his spirit in the life, law, literature and character of humanity, we long for the more personal touch. It is in the letters of men that we learn to know them more intimately. A letter is more personal than an essay, more intimate and informal than a poem; it gives us the little personal touches and glimpses which admit us to closer fellowship and show us the real man and his moods.

One of the outstanding books of recent years is the *Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page,* our Ambassador to England during the war. How the letters light up his life and character! Without them his biography would lose more than half its charm, and his real personality would be well-nigh lost. As we read the letters we see the vast tragedy

of the war through the prism of his mind, along with all manner of hints and revelations of his noble and beautiful spirit. Those of us who knew him prize the letters beyond value. As we turn the pages we see again the old-fashioned Southern gentleman—tall, angular, homely, kindly—full of wisdom and humor, and hear him telling negro stories. Toward the end of his ambassadorship he was often ill, and more than once I filled speaking engagements for him. On the first occasion I went to see him, asking him how to act and what he would have me say.

"Remember," he said, "an Ambassador is a man with a ball and chain on his foot. He must say what ought to be said, whether it is so or not. His duty is to look wise and say nothing in particular—using plenty of soft soap."

"But how can I represent you," I said, "unless I tell a negro story? The English people are fond of your stories, which are also parables, and you must furnish the stories."

My suggestion started him telling stories, making him forget that he was ill. It was a bitter time in the winter of 1918; the English people were depressed, and we wanted to cheer them up. Two stories he especially recommended, one illustrating how long America expected to stay in the war. Sambo and Rastus were on trial, as usual, for various kinds of mischief, and after they had been sentenced were on their way back to jail:

"What did you git, Sambo?" asked Rastus. "How long is you in fer?"

"I gits six months. How long is you in fer, Rastus?"

"I is in frum now on," said Rastus.

Armed with such good stories, and looking as dignified and official as possible, I went to a great public meeting at Hackney, Stoke Newington, an "official" of my country for the first time. The Ambassador himself could not have had a more cordial reception. It was an odd experience to be addressed as "Your Excellency," and it made me feel queer. Anyway, I tried to look wise and important, and the Ambassador said next day that, judging from reports, I did not disgrace him. Such memories come back across the years—trivial incidents, but revealing—not recorded in a biography. Something like this was what St. Paul had in mind when he said that the life of Christ ought to be manifest in our mortal flesh—in the little things such as one would write in a letter to a friend.

What a stir it would make in the world if from some nook or corner in the East there should be discovered a letter written by Jesus to a friend! Many of us recall with what breathless interest we read, a few years ago, that some hitherto unknown words of Jesus had been found in a rubbish heap in Egypt. They were not greater or wiser than many of his words familiar to us, but they somehow made him seem more real, if not more near. They were golden words, gems picked up amid a litter of waste, aglow, like all his words, with beauty and surprise. Who is not grateful for them, especially

for these two: "Raise a stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and I am there;" and this bit of pilgrim script: "The world is merely a bridge; ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings on it."

Happily we have many volumes of the Letters of Jesus, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of God in human lives. "Ye are letters of Christ, known and read of all men"—how arresting, how searching to be told that our little lives are a part of the vast biography of Jesus, letters conveying to our fellow men just those more intimate and personal touches which they are seeking to make him more real to them! The real Higher Criticism is not a question as to the Gospel of Luke or John, but the Gospel according to You and Me. "According to *my* gospel," as St. Paul said, knowing that each of us has a gospel, or, rather, is a gospel. There is something unique, particular and precious in each of us, and this unique thing is made use of to reveal something unique in the Life of Jesus. So it was with the writers of the Gospel narratives. Matthew made Jesus known as the fulfiller of high prophetic dreams. Mark might have entitled his manuscript the Acts of Jesus, so intent was he to record what Jesus did. Luke wrote for Greeks, and so portrayed a perfect man with such grace and charm that Renan called his Gospel the most beautiful book in the world. The Gospel of John is not so much a narrative as an interpretation, a story of the inner life of Jesus. Later came the Gospel of St. Paul, with its deep insight

and its vision not only of the truth but of the Person of Jesus—adding the wonder of what he was to the beauty of what he taught. Each one wrote in his own tongue, from his own angle of insight, telling of that in Jesus which his nature, training, and experience fitted him to record.

In the same way, each of us reveals, as in a letter, some beauty in Jesus which our life and experience has prepared us to reveal. There are some to know whom is like reading a letter—not like some letters we get, "dictated but unsigned"—telling of the exquisite tenderness and healing sympathy of Jesus. Others tell of his incredible courage, others of his patience, his good cheer, his pity, his unconquerable hope. What does your life and mine tell of the spirit and life of Jesus? What do men learn from our lives about Jesus—not merely from what we say, but from what we are? Often, alas, the page is blotted or blurred and hard to read, because we fail to make vivid the message our lives were meant to reveal. Or, like some old manuscripts, the letter is dim, faded, or half erased, and something else is scrawled over it, obscuring its story.

Once upon a time I made a study of the great letter-writers, and I learned that, almost without exception, they have been men and women mortally wounded by some great sorrow, some desolating disappointment. Just why it is so is hard to know, unless it is that a great sorrow makes us more aware of the beauty and comfort of little things. For, oddly enough, nearly all great letters have to do with

the little things of life, which we often overlook or do not think worthy of record—like the letter of Cowper telling about a spider weaving her web. The letters of Lamb are like white-caps on the bosom of a profound, heart-shaking tragedy. What a brave heartache lay behind the letters of Emily Dickinson and Jane Carlyle, just published. Here is a truth to remember about our griefs and misfortunes, if so that we may bear them in such wise as to become letters of sympathy, courage, and power to our fellows.

Every great preacher has a favorite topic, some truth that is nearer to his heart than any other. His ministry may lead us over wide ranges of important truth, but there is always some vine and fig-tree, some wayside spring, where he loves to linger. The late Theodore Munger brooded over the Pity of Christ, until, toward the end, he came to wear the very aspect of the compassionate Master. Looking into his face in those quiet, later years was like reading a letter full of the Pity of Jesus. The highest truth can not be stated or taught in words. The Word must become flesh, as of old, if its grace and truth are to be fully revealed. What we need in our troubled world is not more books of dogma, but more Christ-like lives—more letters from Jesus, more of his spirit mediated through tender, helpful, joyous human lives.

When Lincoln died, Tolstoi, looking across from Russia, said: "He was a Christ in miniature;" and that should be true of each of us. Of all truths none

is more practical, none less metaphysical, than the truth of the incarnation—that is, the incarnation of Christ in us. A stanza in one of the elegies written on the death of Sir Philip Sidney describes what that truth means when it becomes real in actual life. It shows itself to be authentic in—

> A sweet, attractive kind of grace;
> The full assurance given by looks;
> Perpetual comfort in a face;
> The lineaments of Gospel books.

THE GOLDEN RULE

PRAYER

Eternal Father, in Thy presence we live our fleeting lives, upheld by Thy power, embosomed in Thy goodness, led by Thy truth. Make Thy love real to us here that we may the better realize it always and everywhere. Grant us, under Thy high and hospitable roof, the quiet and confidence that make for clear thinking and right feeling, which may bear fruit in noble living. Give our wandering minds a Divine direction; lead us to the mount of purification and show us the joy of those who seek righteousness and the vision of the pure in heart.

Take from us, O Lord, if only for a brief time, all distraction of mind, all confusion of perplexity, that we may see the heights from whence cometh our strength. Touch our minds with noble desires and pure aspirations; lead us in the paths of righteousness, for Thy name's sake. Teach us a more delicate justice, a more sympathetic judgment, a wiser pity; and, above all, fill our hearts with a great, Christ-given kindness. In thought, in word, in deed, make us disciples of Him who lived the life of Love.

Enable us, by Thy grace, to rise above our daily lot and lay hold of that which is Eternal. Through all the changing scenes of life, through its bafflements, its sickness, its sorrow, and its joy, teach us to make Thy wiser will our own. Take our spirits into Thy holy temple, that our earthly life may be lived by the strength and in the light of Thy presence. So, by Thy mercy, we shall know the truth that emancipates and the love that consecrates. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

THE GOLDEN RULE

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. 7:12.

HEAR now a strange thing. It is by all agreed that the Golden Rule is a kind of vest-pocket edition of the religion of Jesus, a brief practical epitome and exposition of the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which James called "the royal law" of life. Yet in the literature of the American pulpit, with which I have a fairly wide acquaintance, I recall only one sermon on the Golden Rule—a sermon preached by David Swing almost fifty years ago. How odd that the principle in which Jesus summed up his teaching as to the duty of man to man should thus be neglected; as if the thought of the Church had been more concerned with the nature of the Teacher than with the application of his teaching.

Let us consider first the origin of the Golden Rule. Of course, the idea was neither new nor original with Jesus, except in the use and application he made of it. One of the disciples of Confucius, weary of maxims and rules, said to the Teacher: "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" To which the Teacher replied: "Is not Reciprocity such a word? What you would not want

done to yourself, do not do to others." Isocrates put it in this form: "What you are angry at when inflicted on you by others, this do not to others." A Greek biographer of Aristotle relates that, being asked how we should behave toward our friends, he answered, "As we should wish them to behave toward us." When a pupil asked Rabbi Hillel to teach him the whole law while he stood on one foot, the Rabbi said: "What is hateful to thee, do not do to another. This is the whole law; the rest is explanation of it." The book of Tobit admonishes us, "What thou hatest, do to no one." Seneca, the Stoic, said that the best way to confer a benefit is "to give as we should wish to receive." It will be observed that the sayings of Confucius, Isocrates and Hillel are merely negative; that of Seneca is confined to giving, and that of Aristotle to the treatment of friends. Jesus makes the principle a rule of positive action, and he extends it to include our dealings with all men, declaring, as Hillel did, that it is the sum of all the law and the prophets.

But we must not forget the religious background of this principle, as so many do in our day, taking it out of the context of the teaching of Jesus. The Golden Rule is accepted as the sum of Christianity by many who think it as easy to apply as it is to remember, and who wish to be free of the cumbrous details of theology. What could be simpler, more reasonable, less open to attack? Here is practical Christianity, pure and undefiled, let us throw all the theories over the wall! Here, if anywhere, lies the center of

that "sweet reasonableness" which Arnold proclaimed as the very genius of Jesus. Let a man take the Golden Rule, not glibly, not blandly, but seriously, as the rule of his life, not only with those he loves, but with all men, and he will soon find that it is neither simple to understand nor easy to apply. Indeed, he will soon learn, before he has gone very far, that he has need of the best theology he can discover, if he is to have the courage, the sincerity, the wisdom, the patience, much less the insight, to make it workable. No wonder Chesterton said that Christianity has not failed, but has been found difficult and laid to one side. The principle of Jesus is simple enough, but its application, not to an ideal world in which all men are Christians, but to the real world in which we live, is bewilderingly complex and difficult.

Jesus knew it would be so; hence the word "therefore" in his statement of the Golden Rule, in which it is set forth as a recapitulatory inference from all his teaching. As Luther said: "All the teachings of these three chapters he here ties up in a little bit of a bundle that every one may place in his bosom." What are the teachings to which the word "therefore" points back, as to the premises of a Divine syllogism? All that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, of which it is a part: the spirit of the Beatitudes, the faith and practice of the Lord's Prayer, the warnings against vanity, misjudgment, and contempt of any man; and, in the immediate context, faith in and experience of the Fatherly love

of God. No man, who is a man, will give his son a stone if he asks for bread. "How much more" will God, the Father, give good to His sons when they ask; "therefore" do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Because God is good to us we must do good to others, and in that faith alone can we find inward sustaining for the difficult undertakings of good men. In short, as has been well said, morality without religion can never penetrate from good form to goodness, from manners to morals.

Not only must we have this spiritual background and experience, but we must use every art of wisdom and strategy at our command, if we are to interpret the meaning of the Golden Rule and apply it to life. Taken literally, and without qualification, it would mean that we must do whatever others want, and give them whatever we might wish under like conditions. So interpreted, it would mean that we must give the child his folly, the toper his liquor, and even to the burglar his booty. Even when we do not wish to evade obligation, we must, so far as possible, avoid absurdity. Altruism, as Tolstoi has shown in an entry in his diary, if taken by itself, and followed to its logical issue, ends in anarchy—against which an elemental sanity protests. Obviously Jesus means that we must do unto others—not necessarily what they want us to do—but what we ourselves would like them to do unto us if we, with our desires as disciples of Christ, were in their position. And just as we like to be treated, not exactly according to what we are, but according to what we are hoping

and trying to be, so we should treat others. A great teacher of mine, now fallen asleep, put it in this way:

"It is taken for granted that what one wishes others to do to him is something right, such a thing as he ought to wish. Otherwise the rule would lead to folly and crime. If a man should become a criminal, he would probably wish the judge to acquit him, though guilty; it does not follow that if the same man is a judge, he ought to let the guilty go free. When a child, one did not wish his father to restrain him; it does not follow that he must now let his son go unrestrained. No, it is taken for granted that the wish of our own to which Jesus bids us conform in our treatment of others is, or would be, a right wish under all the circumstances. I do not wish now to be treated as a child, for mine is not the character or condition of a child; but if I were a child, and had just views and right feelings, I should not wish my father to make me my own master when unfit for it, but to restrain and discipline me, in the way that would be for my real good; and thus I ought to act towards my child."

There is a sharp point in the thrust of Bernard Shaw, in his *Maxims for Revolutionists,* the first of which is as follows: "Do not unto others as you would that they should do unto you; their tastes may not be the same." If we make our fitful desires—our mere whim—the test in applying the Golden Rule, again we fall into absurdity. The error of Shaw, despite his impish cleverness, lies in the idea that each has a separate form of taste, when in

reality there are great standards by which we must test our own taste as well as that of others. After all, it comes very much to this: What do we, in our noblest moods and clearest insight, desire others to do to us? To make us happy? By desiring to make others happy we do add a large province to our lives, and one that is fruitful and beautiful, since it is easier to make another happy than to make oneself happy. Also, by the happiness that is ours when we succeed in making others happy, we are in duty bound to be responsive to any kindness by another, so that he may be made happy by his effort to make us so. But is happiness the highest desire, and must we make it the highest test?

What we need more than almost anything else is to recover the depth and beauty and power of the word Love, as Jesus used it when he told us to love one another. Manifestly he meant something more than a sentimental fondness, something finer, firmer, and far more enduring. The Love which Jesus made the soul of his religion "is not kindly emotion, but moral esteem; the redeeming identification of oneself with another; no flickering or wayward emotion, but the energy of a steadfast will bent on creating fellowship." To know his truth we must dig deep, and deliver ourselves from a merely superficial and sentimental idea of Christian love. The object of a love which has any moral quality in it must be not simply to please, but to benefit—at once redeeming and edifying—defined in terms of the common good; "and when it finds that good being

injured by its action it must revise its plans and deepen its insight." Such love believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things; and it never faileth because it has its roots in the love of God so broad-based that it can transcend temporary failure.

Yes, love is the law of life, but love must be wise, skillful, creative, and prophetic, as well as all-enduring. Sympathy and insight we must have if we are to be followers of Christ, and the imagination to put ourselves in the place of another—to sit where he sits and see life from his angle. But to the prompting of love must be added "the moral obligation to be intelligent," else we run the risk of injuring our fellow man by helping to make him greedy, selfish, exacting, as every philanthropist is preyed upon by a horde of parasites. An example in point has recently come to light in the *Life of Samuel Butler,* and the story of his dealings with his friend Pauli. He met his friend in New Zealand, and, as Pauli was in bad health and poor, Butler paid his passage to England, and agreed to give him a thousand dollars a year for three years, while he studied for the law. Butler fulfilled his promise not only for three years, but for thirty-three years, often when he himself was almost in penury. In secret Pauli earned, at times, four thousand dollars a year and died leaving an estate of forty-five thousand dollars, without remembering Butler in his will. The point is not the injury done to Butler, but the injury to the man who sinned against him—a sin encouraged by kindness

until his soul must have been dead within him. Butler, who did not profess to be a Christian, took the matter in an admirable spirit:

"I felt pretty sure I was doing a great deal too much, but I had rather have done a great deal too much than a little too little. My conscience is absolutely clear of all offense toward him, save that of having made it so deplorably easy to do things which, if I had made them harder, he would have been less likely to do."

An instance less extreme, and more amusing, is found in the *Autobiography of Madame Guyon,* whose husband was ill and bad-tempered, as husbands are apt to be when they are ill. The physician prescribed broths and remedies distasteful to the patient, and the mother-in-law and the servants refused to take these things into his room, fearing his frown. His wife took them and endured the unpleasantness. But when anything the patient liked was to be served, the mother-in-law snatched it from the hands of the wife and got all the thanks. Again, it is not the injury to Madame Guyon that is the point—she triumphed over it, making it a part of her spiritual discipline—but the selfishness of the fractious patient and his domineering mother which the goodness of the wife unwittingly encouraged. How often we have seen parents, by their unselfish devotion and sacrifice, make their children hoggishly selfish, taking all for granted and giving nothing. How often, too, a daughter, giving her life to aging parents with beautiful loyalty, makes them exacting,

grasping, and peevish. Thus, even when our motives are the noblest and kindest, we often do injury when we mean to do good—yet, perhaps, it is better to do much too much than "a little too little." Only, we must avoid what a recent novelist calls "the snake of unselfishness," by which he meant that it is easier, and less trouble, to be soft and sentimental, oftentimes, when it is our duty to be stern, lest we undermine the moral stamina of those whom we serve.

None the less, when all due qualifications are made—dictated, not by casuistry, but by Christian common sense—the Golden Rule remains the sovereign law of love in action, to obey which is the first duty of a disciple of Jesus. Moreover, let us not forget that it applies not only to our deeds, but to our thoughts and our words as well. How cruelly people think about their fellows, and how brutal is their speech about one another. Even our church folk are masters of all the black arts of gossip, and their tongues are often as poisonous as serpents. From all this bitter, biting cruelty the Golden Rule, if we take it to heart, will deliver us, making us messengers of generosity and good will. A little more kindness by each of us every day, a more delicate art of justice, a finer skill of insight, sympathy and service, would make to-morrow such a day as the sun never looked down upon. The Kingdom of Heaven is always at hand, only a step away, but we go every which way, round and round about, rather than take that simple step pointed out by the Golden Rule.

What is true in small matters—if such matters

can be called small—is equally true in the larger life of the world, with its political brutality and its age-long industrial feud. Older than the Pyramids is the war of class against class, of nation against nation, of creed against creed—must it go on forever? Slowly men are beginning to see that Jesus was not a mere dreamer, after all, and that he can lead us out of the jungle of greed, chaos, and inhumanity; in short, that righteousness is common sense, and that brotherhood is good business. Such men as our Big Brother, Arthur Nash—whose profound religious experience is only equaled by his sagacity, his patience, his humor, and his expertness in doing good—are leading the way, showing men, by practical vindication, the wisdom of the law of love in the world of trade. It is a great adventure, asking for all that we have of faith and fortitude, of practical capacity and spiritual vision; but One is with us who has not only the courage to lead, but the wisdom to direct and the power to help. The words of John Burroughs show us the long vista of history and of hope:

> Man was proud before he was kind; he was chivalrous before he was decent; he was tattooed before he was washed; he was painted before he was clothed; he built temples before he built a home; he sacrificed to his gods before he helped his neighbor; he was heroic before he was self-denying; he was devout before he was charitable. We are losing the savage virtues and vanities and growing in the grace of all the humanities, and this process will go on, with many interruptions and setbacks of course, till the Kingdom of Love is at last fairly established upon the earth.

THE MEANING OF PRAYER

PRAYER

Eternal Father, not in dull use and wont do we bow together, but as those who would dedicate themselves to Thee anew in the spirit and faith of Jesus. Show us, while we unite our hearts, what we most need, and put into our minds the thoughts and desires which Thou dost ever delight to satisfy. May we be led by the Spirit into the light of things that abide, and have reflected in us something of their stillness and power.

Lord of our hearts, for many things we bless Thee —for life and love and their deep revealings—but most of all for the gate of prayer opening into the fountains that quench immortal thirst. If any here have special burdens, arising from hard lot or declining health, or any other of the many ills that make life difficult, may they learn through prayer that prophetic patience which waits in faith for the return of the light.

Hitherto Thou hast sustained us; uphold us still, O Lord, and make us masters of trouble and temptation, by Thy grace. From the sad may sorrow and sighing be lifted at the bidding of Thy mercy, and for the penitent may the clouds part in hope. Forgive us that we so often seek a transient and uncertain good when the eternal good is ever near us. May the spirit of Him in whose name we pray be the breath of our souls, His truth our light, His presence our joy. Amen.

THE MEANING OF PRAYER

"Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks." 1 Thess. 5:17.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." John 14:13.

"And he continued all night in the prayer of God." Luke 7:12.

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matt. 6:11.

DOES it do any good to pray? Many are asking this question to-day in a mood of perplexity, chiefly, perhaps, because they do not pray; and they answer it in the negative. If we are living under a reign of law, rigid and invariable, what is the use of prayer, since we may not hope to alter the order of the world? If, as Jesus said, "the Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask," and if He is really a Father, why bother to ask? And a final practical reason is added: We have tried prayer, and there is nothing in it. Such an attitude is widespread in our day, especially among the young—hence my theme.

Let us take the first text first, not only because it is the shortest verse in the Greek Testament, but because it may well set the key for all our thinking about the nature and practice of prayer. How much high and beautiful truth is packed into three words! Yet at first its counsel seems impossible, if not actu-

ally irreligious, as if the common offices of life were unnecessary and to be laid aside. But those offices are of Divine appointment, and it would be disloyalty to duty to devote to the exercises of religion the time required to do our work in the world. Man must work as well as worship, and there is something amiss when either encroaches upon the other. Therefore it has been attempted to tone this precept down and make it to mean that we should pray often and earnestly. How else can we "pray without ceasing"?

But the Apostle meant what he said, and, if we think of it deeply, we shall see, not only that it is possible, but that there is in fact no other way of praying. Indeed, our difficulty is due to a wrong conception of the nature and meaning of prayer. Too often we think of it as a formal exercise of devotion, kneeling to offer words of petition or thanksgiving; but it is much more than that. It is not merely or necessarily going apart from the din of things and pouring out our hearts in worship. If it were that alone, of course we could not pray without ceasing, else we should be able to do nothing else, and our prayer would be futile. Prayer is more than saying prayers, and if in our meditations we can arrive at a deeper, truer vision of what prayer is, the hour will have been well spent.

Now, consider. If we love at all we love without ceasing. A mother never ceases to love her son. She is not always caressing him, nor is she thinking about him every hour of the day. But her love

never tires, never tarries, never sleeps. If you find her in the midst of her labor, she will talk of many things; but just mention the name of her son, and her eyes grow soft and wistful at thought of him. Her heart is full, and a touch makes it overflow. That is her constant and characteristic attitude toward him, always, everywhere. She may go apart and write a letter to her boy, but she does not have to retire to her room to think of him, much less to love him. Just so it is with prayer. If we pray at all we pray without ceasing. As Elizabeth Browning said:

> "In a mother undefiled
> Prayer goeth on in sleep, as true
> And pauseless as the pulses go."

Prayer, then, is not simply an act, but a constant and characteristic attitude of reverence, of dependence, of obedience and aspiring life toward God. How any man can live a single day of his life and not be always aware of his absolute dependence upon Another than himself is hard to know. Surely it is God that hath made us and not we ourselves, and we are every moment dependent upon Him, as a flower is dependent upon the sun from which it derives its color. To recognize this fact, and order our lives accordingly, is prayer. At its best and simplest it is a constant and earnest desire of the whole life toward Him in whose great Hand we stand. In the words of Erskine: "When we have learned to offer up every duty connected with our situation as a sacrifice to God, a settled employment is just a settled

habit of prayer." No doubt this is what an old mystic meant when he said that to labor is to pray, to work is to worship.

The first sermon of Emerson was about prayer, and it had three points, which shows that it was orthodox in form, whatever we may think of its teaching. He got his "tip" for the sermon in a talk with a wise old Methodist saint. First, all men are always praying. Second, all prayers are always answered. Third, be careful what you pray for, lest it come upon you and mean your undoing. Each point is as true as it is startling. The deep, dominating desire of a man is his prayer, for good or bad, underlying all particular petitions; and it works itself out by calling all the forces of being to its aid, and engaging in its furtherance every power within reach. Often a half-conscious desire is an ambush to betray and overthrow us, defeating and bringing to ruin what we think we desire. Moral victory lies in teaching the deepest desires of our nature to serve the highest ends of life and character; making our unceasing prayer, the answer to which is inevitable, one with the will of God.

Our characters are the sum of our answered prayers. They reveal to-day what we have really been asking, desiring, seeking, in the days gone by, whether we realize it or not. If the deepest desire of a man be for material things, he is a materialist, no matter how pious he may be in the pew, or how eloquent in the pulpit; and he learns, perhaps too

late, that "nothing fails like success." His prayer is not only answered, but the deed of transfer is recorded in his personality, as the answer is also recorded in the character of the man whose prayer has won for him a citizenship in the kingdom of light. As Emerson put it "If a man have not found his home in God, his manners, his forms of speech, the turn of his sentences, the build of his opinions, will involuntarily confess it, let him brave it out how he will."

Every man may thus measure himself by asking the question: What, to me, are the profoundest desires and necessities of life? Much of the unreality of prayer comes of expressing what we think we ought to desire, not what we actually desire, and this jar makes a discord in the deep places of the heart. The religion of a man is not what he professes, but what he lives out and acts upon from day to day. His life is his religion. If life itself be a prayer, no one should desire what he is unwilling to lay before God, and no one should pray for what he does not actually desire. What, then, is the office of the hour of prayer? It may be put in this way. When a captain of a ship is setting out on a voyage he first adjusts his compass, corrects its divergence, and counteracts the influences which draw the needle from the pole. Such is the office of the hour of worship. It is an adjustment of the compass of the soul, the restoration of deflection, and the pointing of the will to the Will of God. The soul which thus sets

sail will find itself, not indeed free from all storms of the spirit, but sure of its direction through all storms.

That is to say, the hour of prayer is a time when we test what our unceasing prayer is. And the test is this: Is it the reknitting of a severed bond or the recollection of an unbroken fellowship? Happy the man who at the end of the day can say, like the old English saint, "Lord, it is the same between us as when the day began." In the Great Prayer obedience and adoration come before asking. First, Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will; then give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us. Why bother to ask if God is our Father? In the physical world unless man works, in the intellectual world unless he thinks, God can not bestow His gifts. Just so in the moral and spiritual world—unless man seeks, asks, knocks, God has no opportunity to bestow His richest gifts.

When we look at prayer in this larger, truer way, all objections to it fall away. Admit that God produces foreintended effects by the instrumentality of the forces of nature, are not our human forces part of these? Men do not cease to make effort to obtain their ends because they can not change the order of the world. Instead, they use that order, work with it, and so achieve their ends in a thousand ways. So, likewise, we pray, because prayer is also a force of our nature and a law of life. To deny its efficacy is to deny the efficacy of effort, the force of faith, the power of thought. Nature is not all of a piece. There are strata, grades, levels—the in-

organic, the organic, the moral. Each level has its own laws, and lower levels are open to control by the order, or orders, above. Everywhere, if we obey the law of the power the power will obey us. Since the universe exists for moral and spiritual ends, surely we have in that fact a key to the meaning and worth of prayer. The next great step in the evolution of man will be the perfection, or at least the finer culture, of the spiritual instinct—a revelation of new ranges of the will of man and the willingness of God.

Not yet have we begun to realize the almost incredible power of the will of man, limited as it is. Think of what it has done in the world, for good and ill, and consider what it may do if it ceases to rebel and gives itself to the service of a will higher and wiser than itself. Dora Greenwell foresaw this in her little essay on *Prayer as Will,* as did Meredith when he said that the curse of our religion is that we cling to God with weakness, not with our strength. To the will to power, and the will to believe, we must add the will to pray, and the will to receive—and, what is equally vital, the will to listen and work for the answer. When we read the life of Santa Teresa and see what glories the human will may win from the will of God, we know what Dante meant when he wrote:

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence from fervent love, and from the living hope that overcometh the Divine volition. Not in the way that man overcometh man; we conquer it because it will

be conquered, and, conquered, conquers by benignity."

What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? Something more, surely, than using the blessed name as a tag tacked on to the end of our petitions—something leagues higher, fathoms deeper. It means to pray in the spirit of Jesus, in his faith, for the things for which he prayed. What did Jesus pray for while he walked among us here? The purpose of his life, its passion, its power, lay in its absolute, eager, joyous devotion to the will of God. To do the will of God always, everywhere, to everybody, in all ways at his command, not reluctantly but rejoicingly—that was the glory of his life and the revelation of those truths and laws which are as true and sure as the movements of the natural order. Truly, not many of us have ever actually prayed "in his name." For no one who prays in that faith and vision will ever ask for a selfish or unworthy thing, but always for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven in us and in humanity; always for the things for which Jesus gave his life and wrought his work.

Can man by prayer change the will of God? No, and Yes. True prayer does not seek or wish to change the larger will of God, which involves in its sweep and scope the destiny of humanity and the world; but it does and can change the will of God concerning us. If a man is living a wicked life, we know the will of God for him, as we know the outworking of a problem in geometry. But if he comes to himself, like the prodigal, and changes his way

of living and his inner attitude, he changes the will of God—if not His will, at least His intention. That is, he attains what the Divine will would never —could never—have given him unless it had been affected by his will and prayer. Further than that true prayer does not seek to go, since its very genius is to serve the will of God. It does not try to use God for our ends, but to be used by Him for His ends. As such it is not only vitally real and rewarding, but the most profoundly practical of all forms of human effort and aspiration.

What can be the meaning of the text which Wesley translated by the phrase "the prayer of God"? It almost makes the heart stand still, hinting of things of which we hardly dare speak, save in a whisper. Does heaven pray to earth as earth prays to heaven? Indeed, yes. So long as God is what He is, and man is what he is, there will be speech between them; and that speech is religion. No soul climbs the shining ladder of prayer to return alone. Angels ascend and descend, thitherward and hitherward, in the endless fellowship of God and the soul. Yes, heaven prays to earth, "as though God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God," as St. Paul put it. What a sentence! The beseeching God, pleading with man, persuading, appealing, His prayer to us the inspiration and answer to our prayer to Him! The thought of it is overwhelming, waking echoes too far and deep for us to follow save on our knees.

Yet if prayer be a constant and characteristic

attitude of reverence in man, it is itself a proof of a constant and unwavering love in God, as effect reveals cause. So all the masters of the spiritual life agree, from Isaiah to Pascal. After all, what men call mysticism is only a higher kind of common sense, the endeavor to bring the light and love of God to solve the problem of the day, and to do the duty appointed. It is what St. Paul meant by that phrase which runs like a refrain through all his epistles, "in Christ." To be in Christ, in the rhythm of his will, free in his truth, his prayer our prayer—what mingled awe and wistful longings that haunting phrase evokes!

There is, besides, a wise and beautiful law of day by day which runs all through the Bible. Manna lasted only for a day. Jesus taught us to live one day at a time, asking only for bread to feed us from sun to sun; "give us this day our daily bread." If we have a great sorrow, a great temptation, a great perplexity—and who has not?—let us bear it one day at a time, without bitterness and without foreboding. Sufficient unto the day is the duty thereof, and the grace to do it or bear it. The error is that we try to bear in advance the piled-up days and years ahead, and sink, not under the weight of to-day, but of to-morrow, to-morrow, and to-morrow. Let us live by the lay of day by day.

> Lord, for to-morrow and its needs
> I do not pray;
> Keep me, my God, from stain of sin,
> Just for to-day.

Let me both diligently work,
  And duly pray;
Let me be kind in word and deed,
  Father, to-day.

Let me in season, Lord, be grave,
  In season gay:
Let me be faithful to Thy grace,
  Dear Lord, to-day.

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

PRAYER

Hush our hearts, O God, that we may hear within us Thine eternal song, and rise above the confusion and contradictions of life. Grant us release, if only for one dross-drained hour, from the woe that haunts us, that we may know the gospel of music and the truth it has to tell. Something within us sings, something deeper than our sin, deeper than our sorrow. We hear it when we are still; Thou hearest it all the time.

For the masters of melody, who have been the interpreters and deliverers of our spirits and the teachers of Thy truth, we praise Thee and give thanks. Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to us—winged spirits who listened to Thy voice, and told in song what they learned in sorrow. Attune our faith to the truth that above all tumult, below it, through it, there is an eternal harmony yet to be revealed—when we have ears to hear it.

Lord, Thou hearest all these beating human hearts, and knowest the story of each one. Give us Thyself to walk with us in our journey, a Presence to break our loneliness, a Light to lead us in the homeward way; yea, a Song in the house of our pilgrimage. Draw us by all the instincts, memories and yearnings of our hearts into Thy clearer presence, and at last grant us to mingle our voices with those who sing the song of the redeemed. In His name, Amen.

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

"I will open my dark saying on the harp." Psalm 49:4.

HOW could the singer tell the secret of his heart and the mystery that he felt save by the aid of music, which helps us to tell what else is untellable? For a right exegesis of this Psalm we need to hear the tones of his harp and the melody which accompanied the parable of his thought. One hesitates to speak of music, knowing how utterly words fail to describe its beauty and power. It has its spring in feeling; its appeal is to the heart; and men do not care to analyze or define its spell. They prefer to lose themselves in its sweetness, to be lifted on its wings out of their weariness into a larger and freer air. Besides, all wish to hear music speak for itself with its own incomparable eloquence. Yet it may be worth while to inquire into the meaning of the sacrament of sweet song and its ministry to the life of faith.

More and more in late years men have found in music a refuge from the delusions of materialism. It has been so always. When the mind is bewildered by confusion and contradiction, it seeks escape into an over-world of harmony. Of all arts music is the most free from sects and parties, and the most ade-

quate to express, not only the varying moods of humanity, but those subtle intimations of a world lying beyond that of reason and the senses. One thing is evident: music, in times to come, will be less a luxury and more a necessity. Hence the homage paid in our day to the masters of this heavenly art, because they are among the interpreters and deliverers of the soul, helping us to utter our deepest faith and hope. They are artists who use tones as poets use words, as painters use colors, and their very names set our hearts humming with love and joy.

Thus Mendelssohn was the Longfellow of music, fluent, graceful, tender, without being dramatic or profound; a scholar, a teller of stories, a weaver into lacework of gentle, clinging sentiments. Chopin was like Tennyson in the delicacy of his feeling, his symmetry and polish of form, and like Keats in the ethereal fineness of his fancy, albeit walking at times in a valley of deep shadow. Liszt was the Byron of music, who appeared like a meteor on the horizon, darted to his zenith, and through an erratic career won such fame as few have achieved: haughty, impetuous, dazzling, daring, leaving a track of flame behind. Wagner was like Victor Hugo, a Titan in his day, virile, fertile, radical, a reformer attacking the bulwarks of classic art; a man of colossal force of genius both as musician and dramatist. Mozart, Bach, Handel, Haydn, and greatest of all, Beethoven—the Shakespeare of music, grand and profound, in sweep and grasp and power like an archangel.

Such names suggest many thoughts as to the nature and ministry of music. It is the oldest of the arts, the most universal, the most appealing, at once the most human and the most divine, and its influence upon man in his long wanderings has been manifold. In classic myth we learn that when Orpheus played upon his lyre the trees ceased their rustlings to listen, and the wild beasts crept out of the forest to hear, forgetting their ferocity. Nay, more; the heart of Pluto was melted, and captive souls escaped from the prison of the gods; the wheel of Ixion stopped, the thirst of Tantalus was satisfied, and even the goddess of Death paused in her melancholy labors. If the slender volume of Greek music evoked such eulogy, what may not be said of the music of to-day, which is almost infinite in its extent and sweetness! For music has deepened with the years, despite the fear of Mill that, having so few notes, it might exhaust its riches.

No other art stirs man so deeply, so entirely, in body, mind and soul; no other sways him with such magic spell. Music is at once the most sensuous and the most spiritual of the fine arts, and therein lies its power and its peril. What Ulysses and his wanderers found it most difficult to resist was not the anger of the sea, but the subtle, sweet, fatal witchery of the song of the sirens. Not all music is noble. At its best this art makes the soul jubilant with praise and tender with prayer, and lifts us to the gates of heaven. But there is a rich, sensuous, voluptuous music that stirs every imp that hides in

the mixed heart of man. No poison in life is more insidious than this evil music. One hour under its enchantment can stain a man for many a day. Every sentinel of the soul falls asleep under its dreamy spell, and man is at the mercy of passion. It has been the accompaniment of the dance of death in every age. The wise old Greeks knew this long ago. Therefore they did not let music run wild, as we do, dancing attendance upon every wayward passion. In their laws, as in their philosophy, they condemned unclean music as a sin against the gods and a crime against the State.

What is music, and what is the secret of its spell? What is this art that seems to know the road we have journeyed, and tells so many old, forgotten memories of the soul? If we ask the poets what it is that sends the plow-boy whistling to his toil, that follows the housewife in her work, that ripples in the laughter of little children and in the songs of birds, their answer is—a song. Music, they tell us, is an echo of heaven; a hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the world; a voice from the irrevocable past; the great mysticism; the beautifier of time; a silver key to the fountain of tears; love in search of a word; a rose-lipped shell that murmurs of the eternal sea that brought us hither, and upon which we set sail when we go hence. But when we have gleaned all these images of speech, we do not know what music is. As Beethoven said in one of his letters, it is more than a concord of sweet sounds; it is something from a higher world which we cannot

describe, much less define; but which we have the power to invoke.

Perhaps its secret, so far as we can define it, lies in its instinct for law. Music is spiritual mathematics. It moves with measured step, using geometrical designs, and cannot free itself from numbers without losing its soul. As the Psalmist said, "Thy Laws have become my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." Apparently the most lawless of arts, music is, in fact, the most bound by law. Disobedience is discord. Its power, its authority, sovereignty, are in its abject obedience, as if to teach us that the wild, glad freedom for which we crave comes, not from throwing law away, but from obeying it perfectly. Fetterless freedom ends in misery, discord, anarchy. That is why more than one publicist has held that music should be taught in the schools as an antidote to anarchy. Our music may be deeper than that of the Greeks, but they understood the uses of music, as we do not. It was a large part not only of their religion, but also of their education, and of their healing art as well—its melodies being employed to heal minds jangled and unstrung. They held that music is the symphony of the gods, the art which unites the voice of beauty, love, and truth; and for that reason any profanation of it was blasphemy.

Music is more than mere expression; it is revelation. St. Cecelia listening to angel voices is more than a poetic fancy—in the life of Beethoven we read of many experiences of that kind. As Newman

said—he who loved his old violin and knew so well how to play it—these strange yearnings evoked by music do not simply come and go, and begin and end in themselves. No, they have escaped from a higher world; they are the living laws of God, revealing the inner and underlying harmony of all things—the rhythm of the universe and of the soul. So Shakespeare taught in those almost angelic lines in the "Merchant of Venice." Tyndall thought that if we had an auroscope for the ear, as we have a microscope for the eye, the air about us "would be full of hallelujahs, where we hear only the feeble whispers of our own prayers." That is to say, music is wrought into the very foundation and fiber of the world; it is a rhythmical revelation of the order of the universe, and a witness for God.

Down upon our sorrowful earthly life, upon its sin and shame, its fret and jar of days, falls this revelation of melody. It stirs us with the breath of heaven, with glints of sunbreak on stainless peaks, with contempt for wrong and pain and death, with passionate yearning for the face of God. When we hear it, the leaden sky parts for a moment above the griefs and graves of earth, revealing the Infinite through the rift. It helps us reach up toward high ideals "out of the night that covers us"; it melts us to pity for our fellow man, because his life, like our own, is so brief and broken; it gives us sympathy for his follies and his hopes which, like our own, have such little time to grow, and such a long, long decay. Let us thank the God of Mercy and of Melody for

the revelation of sweet song, for the gift of an art which softens the human heart, sweetens our sorrows, and sets us free from weariness and fear.

By its very nature music is priestly in its office and ministry—a priest being one who speaks for man to God, as a prophet is one who speaks for God to man. In the soul of every man there are vague, mystical longings, dim stirrings of unutterable things which are ever seeking to define themselves in speech, but which no words can utter. When Tennyson cried out to the sea

> "Would that some tongue could utter
> The thoughts that arise in me,"

he gave voice to a cry older than the pyramids. If there were no art to utter for man this deep speech, the human heart would break. Indeed, if man were dumb, the very stones would cry out in praise, the hills would clap their hands, and the voice of the sea would become a prayer. Here music comes to our relief. It frees our imprisoned thoughts; it helps us to give shape to those deep yearnings of the heart after we know not what, those impressions from we know not whence—those intimations of infinite truths which seem ever just within our grasp, yet ever elude us. It helps us to utter our trembling speech to God.

But music is also a prophet, bringing from afar the awful yet gracious voice of God, foretelling the ultimate harmony of things. Truly has it been said

that the full chorus and orchestra is a perfect prophecy, down to the last and finest note, of perfected human society. The relation of "voices and instruments to each other, the variety in harmony, the obedience to law drawing its power from sympathetic feeling, the inspiration of a noble theme, the conspiring together to enforce a mighty feeling which is also a thought—we thus have an exact symbol of the destiny of humanity. The summit of life is feeling; the summit of character is sympathy; and music is the art-form that links them together. In some supernal sense, then, music will be the vocation of humanity when its full redemption is come." That is why all high and victorious thought ends in melody, as Pater said all art tends to do. That is why, as Carlyle said, when we think deeply we think musically. Yea, that is why the prophets, when they come near the gates of heaven, hear the rise and fall and echo of sacred song. Aye, it foretells a time, or soon or late, when every wandering human tone will be gathered into the bosom of one sovereign harmony in the life of God.

Even here amid the din and dust of life, we have hints, echoes, and foretokens of what awaits those who seek the truth and love the will of God. Abt Vogler, sitting at his organ, prayed that its keys might obey the wish of his soul. His prayer was granted, and on a ladder of song he climbed to the heights and lived for one radiant hour in a Temple of Melody. The bass notes formed the foundations, the treble notes the spires of that house not made

with hands. Looking out of its windows, he saw life from above—saw it as the great angels see it—saw that death is only a shadow; that evil is naught; that there is not one lost good; that heaven will complete the broken arches of our earthly life. He came down from his House of Song to the rude way of the common life, but he never forgot that vision. It made him an optimist, it kept him an idealist; for, as he said, whoever else may doubt or deny, "'Tis we musicians know."

Because this is so, because music is a revelation and a prophecy, the Bible is the great Book of Music. It begins with a Creation Hymn, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy; and its music, though sometimes faint, is never hushed. The Psalter is a hymn book—aye, it is a great organ with keys of white and black, on which is played all the high, tender, plaintive, aspiring triumphant music of the soul in its quest of God amid the shadows of time. The New Testament, like the Old, opens with a chorus of peace and good will, and closes with a "seven-fold anthem of hallelujahs and harping symphonies." The Magnificat was the cradle lullaby of Jesus, and there must have been many wayside songs in the house of His pilgrimage. On the last night, when He had eaten the parting Supper, they sang a hymn and wended their way to the Garden of Sorrow; and from the Upper Room that hymn has echoed, like a refrain, to the ends of the earth, giving the Christian ages their motive and their melody.

In the dungeon at Phillipi Paul and Silas remembered their song in the night. Pliny tells us that the early Christians met on the first day of the week, while it was yet dark, and sang songs in praise of the Master. The church was built to music. If we could not answer atheism with an argument, we could smother it with an anthem. Every revival of faith has meant a revival of sweet song. Francis of Assisi, Luther, Zinzendorf, and the Wesleys were apostles of melody no less than teachers of faith. As "Rabbi" Duncan said, the people of God are a singing people, and their way is a singing way. To-day our hymn-book is the best symbol of Christian unity and catholicity. When we argue we are far apart; when we sing we are heart to heart. The church is one when it sings and when it prays. In our hours of solemn joys and pure devotion all dividing lines are blurred in a fellowship of melody like that above.

What is the most beautiful book in the world? The Bible, of course, you will answer at once; but the Bible is not a book—it is a library of more than half a hundred books. Which one of these books would you select if you were doomed to the fate of Selkirk, and could take only one? Some of us agree with Renan that the most beautiful book ever written is the Gospel of Luke—because it was written by an artist, a poet, a lover of music. As Dante said: "It is the third Gospel which tells us the gentleness of Jesus"; and He it is who has filled the world with far-echoing melodies. Yea, He is the prophecy of a time when the nameless sorrow, the unutterable

sadness which lingers in all human music whatsoever, shall be heard no more—shall be felt no more.

In the still air the music lies unheard;
In the rough marble the beauty lies unseen;
To make the music and the beauty needs
A Master's touch, a Sculptor's chisel keen.

Great Sculptor! hew and polish us, nor let
Hidden and lost Thy form within us lie;
Great Master! touch us with Thy skillful hand,
Let not the music that is in us die!

THE CHURCH FOR TO-DAY

PRAYER

Eternal Father, holy and merciful, whose beauty is upon us in the splendor of Autumn time, together we unite our hearts in the sacrament of adoration and thanksgiving. Thou alone art righteous and wise; we worship Thee as the Lord of all good life. Because our littleness needs Thy largeness, and our weakness Thy power, we bow at Thine altar waiting for the breath of Thy spirit, like a wind from the eternal hills, pure and refreshing. Show us the strength of fellowship and the might of prayer; light our minds with the visions that make life radiant with prophecy.

Reverently we give ourselves to Thee in a new consecration, as the only return we can make for all Thy goodness and loving-kindness. Fill our minds with light and our hearts with power, that we may serve Thee with patient faith and joyful confidence in Thy sufficiency. Whatever be Thy will for us, build our little lives into Thy kingdom of spiritual faith and fraternal righteousness. Make our days bright with Thy presence, rich in the fruits of the spirit, and radiant with joy. Join us with all who love Thee everywhere, that we may show forth Thy praise in the communion of the doers of good.

In the time of confusion and strife, when broken voices murmur through the world, make us steadfast in the fellowship of Christ. Look upon all here assembled; use us as Thou wilt—hands to do Thy work, lips to speak Thy truth, and lives to be gospels of Thy good-will. Make us followers of Christ in the fellowship of the Church Immortal, in whose service is redemption from sin and healing for sorrow. In the name of Him who loved us, gave Himself for us, and evermore leads us in the way everlasting, Amen.

THE CHURCH FOR TO-DAY

"Upon this rock I will build my church." Matt. 16:18.

SO far as the disciples were concerned, the Life of Jesus was a history of men in the making. Very wonderful was the change wrought in the men who walked with Jesus, for a brief time, in the days of his flesh. A variety of natures made up that little band, and each unfolded in its own way under a common Divine influence, though the touch of the risen Christ was needed to complete the process. As has often been said, the lives of those men in after years are ample evidence not more of the fact of the risen Christ than of his abiding, unseen power. No fact is more clear than that Jesus had to do with materials out of which it would have been impossible for him to build his Church, unless he could provide, and continue to provide, the power by which it was to stand.

That is to say, the Church of Christ is a living temple, building and built upon, and it is upheld today by the same power that first lifted it into being. What impresses even the casual student is that Jesus not only laid the foundation of his Church upon the tragic necessities of human life, but that he had to make the material out of which it was built.

When he gave Simon the name of Peter—meaning a rock—and said, in a word-fancy, that upon a large rock of the same kind he intended to erect his Church, Peter was anything but a solid man. Shifting sand had been a better symbol of one so impulsive, so impetuous, so unstable. But it takes time to make a rock, and the Master knew that sorrow would harden all that was soft in Simon, and soften all that was hard. Time justified his faith, his patience, his skill, and the unstable enthusiast became a man of granite, a pillar in the Church of God.

In the same way, but by a different process, we see John, a son of thunder with a soul of fire, subdued by the gentle strength of the Master into a meditative mystic, though, if we may judge from his letters, he retained a slumbering lightning which he rarely used. So through the list, including Thomas, the melancholy man who demanded material evidence of things unseen, as so many are doing to-day. They were average, ordinary men, like ourselves, in nowise extraordinary when they became disciples—passionate, vain, petty, jealous, often incredibly stupid—yet Jesus chose them and on them risked his cause. Timid and faltering at first, they became flaming heralds of the best tidings to the ends of the earth, all of them, save the Apostle John, suffering martyrdom for the truth as it is in Jesus. Measured by any test of greatness, whether it be growth of character or permanency of influence upon the history of mankind, they must be accounted the very greatest men the world has known. Such power had

Jesus of discovering and developing men for his service, and he has it to-day!

Of course, in a very true sense, Jesus was not the founder, but the finder, of the Church—for it has existed from the beginning. The house of hope, the altar of prayer, is one of the oldest of human institutions, along with the home and the state. They are equally divine, equally sacred. If either is to be selected as more sacred than another, it must be the home. It came first, and it satisfies more human needs than any other fellowship. But we need not set the one over against the others, since all are tokens of our community of aspiration and obligation, of the solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn—in a fellowship of origin and destiny, of faith and hope, of pity and beauty and pain, which binds men to each other, and which binds together all humanity. In the Church of his fathers Jesus was born; in it he wrought the wonder of his life; in it he died. For the Christian Church is the eternal, human Church, exalted and glorified by that incomparable life which is the realized ideal of humanity, as it is the supreme unveiling of God.

On the north side of Loch Etive, in Scotland, there is a gigantic rock, rising sheer and precipitous, in the shadow of which one follows a winding road. It is of conglomerate formation, gravel, small bowlders and large bowlders, all at one time separate but held together in a mass so solid that it has re-

sisted winds and weathers for no one knows how many ages. Even an amateur geologist knows that two forces formed that beetling cliff, a great heat and a great cold. Once, far back, a mighty heat melted that mass, and then, suddenly, a cold sea fell upon it, congealing it into a compact rock. Even so the Rock on which Jesus rests his Church was formed by a profound love and a profound terror—a love of righteousness, passionate and purifying, and terror at the ghastly and forlorn thing life becomes when that vision fades! Once again, in our own day, we have seen what life is, what becomes of the home, the state, and all the fair humanities of life, when the restraints and refinements of religion are withdrawn, and a shudder has been felt throughout the world. Religion is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is the cement of society, and without it the hard-won inheritance of the past is lost and its moral values debased.

Such is the rock upon which Jesus built—the fellowship of good men, and men seeking goodness—fulfilling his own saying that if a man build his house upon a rock it will stand, though winds blow and floods beat upon it. For that reason those who talk, as the manner of some is to-day, of the passing and downfall of the Church, use words without sense, having forgotten the abiding human realities. The Church was not born yesterday; it will not die to-morrow. Emerson was right when he said, in speaking of the old gray temples of faith and prayer—mountains of stone uplifted by human love

and hope—that Nature had adopted them into her race, and given them an equal date with Andes and with Ararat. "If there ever was one good man," he said, "there will be another and there will be many;" and it is this fellowship of righteousness—whereof our temples are symbols—that is the real Church whose blessing we should seek. What is necessary abides. The Church exists because it is rooted in the nature and need of humanity, and if by some vast catastrophe it were destroyed to-morrow it would be rebuilt in some form by the forces which built it in the beginning. It is one of the forms of the Divine Life upon the earth, the organization of humanity in spiritual faith, moral endeavor, and prophetic hope, whereby the holy things that make it worth our time to live are protected and made potent among men.

Jesus spoke great words to the company of peasants on the hillside as they sat listening to his sublime discourse. "Ye are the salt of the earth," he said, meaning that the organization of faith, of reverence, of righteousness, is that element in life without which the whole human business will rot and go to pieces. "Ye are the light of the world," he said, meaning that it is not learning, nor worldly wisdom, but loyalty to the moral ideal, that lights the way along the old human road. "Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," he said, meaning that the fraternity of righteous men is that living body whose function it is to form the moral taste of the world, to create and keep alive a spirit-

ual conscience, without which society dissolves into chaos. Nor do we forget those other words, spoken in a mount in Galilee: "Go into all the world, make disciples of all nations, and, lo, I am with you all the days even to the end of the world." Here the Church has not only its marching orders, but the promise of a power, a Presence, by which its heroic and dedicated fellowship is exalted and sustained.

The Church is a creative, conserving, redeeming fellowship, at once a community and a communion, and if its faults are the faults of humanity, its hopes are the hopes of our race as it rises out of "the old dark backward and abysm of time" toward a star of happy light. No man liveth to himself: "he who seeks his own loses the things in common." Wesley was right when he said that the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion, since it is in fellowship, in the spirit of togetherness, that we realize the presence of God in the common tragedy of man. No one can fight the battle of life for another, and no one can win it alone. We are brothers, to the last man of us, forever, and even the strongest needs the historic fellowship of reverence and righteousness if he is to keep the faith that makes men faithful—the faith, that is, that beneath all that stuns and bewilders, all that fills the heart with agony and dismay, there remains that which, though unattained and unrealized, endures and redeems. For inspiration, for reënforcement, for the quickening of our quest of the ideal, we need the communion of saints, the heroic tradition of prophets and seers who have won the

victory most worth the winning amid temptations and infirmities like our own. Here, no less, is the secret of finding the truth. Royce had much to say about "the fellowship of interpretation," for, as he followed the vision of the Beloved Community, he learned not only that goodness is communal, and that it takes two men and God to make a brother, but that the highest truth is realized only in fellowship.

The Church for To-day is the eternal Church toiling in a new and strange time, seeking to realize the largeness of Christ and the meaning of his Gospel of the Kingdom. Slowly we are coming to see that each of the historic communions has a profound and significant insight; and that the catholic man—the man who has learned the universality of Christ—must make all those insights his own, discovering in the great fellowship the riches of grace in Christ Jesus. Such a man is at home in all places where men lift their hands in prayer, and he belongs to all churches, so far as they keep that precious thing which is the life of all and the treasure of each. By as much as we discover this simple secret—so simple, indeed, that it has been overlooked—we shall realize that unity of the Church which has never been broken from the beginning, and which is profounder and more fruitful than all unions and uniformities. Slowly we are moving out of our provincialisms, our sectarianisms, our exclusiveness, toward a new category of Christianity, led by a more magnificent reinterpretation of Christ in which our separate insights

shall be gathered into one sovereign and transforming vision, fruitful beyond our dreams alike in personal experience, in social ministry, and in world renewal.

No lesser thing is worth striving for to-day. The late George Tyrrell, whose spiritual Odyssey was a tragedy, left us this shining sentence: "God will not ask us, What sort of Church have you lived in? but, What sort of Church have you longed for?" Some of us long for a Church radiant and redeeming, large enough to embody, express, and make eloquent the Christianity of Christ—his faith in God our Father, his love of Man our Brother, his vision of the Kingdom of Heaven our destiny—a Christianity so simple that a child can understand it, and so profound that a philosopher can not fathom it. "What is Christianity?" asks a recent writer. "Grant at Appomattox Court House giving back to Lee his sword and to the Southern cavalrymen their horses for the farms of the South, Lincoln tempering militant justice by the everlasting mercy, John Hay returning the Boxer indemnity money to China, Father Damien among the lepers of Molokai, Tolstoi writing 'Where Love is there God is,' Francis Thompson singing, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,' Edith Cavell standing in eternal granite in Trafalgar Square while the captains and the kings depart—all that is Christianity."

Yes, all that is Christianity, the discovery of which is the supreme achievement of our time; and

the Church of To-day must be as large as its gospel —not only the center and source of influences such as this writer describes, but of much else which no art can trace. Issues of such pith, enterprises of such moment, make the dogmas which divided the Church in other days seem absurd. Indeed, a new alignment of religious forces is taking place before our eyes, following a cleavage visible in every communion. It is not between liberal and orthodox, as of yore, but between those who hold that Christianity is a divine plan whereby a few are to be rescued from a divine wreck, and those who dare to believe that Jesus meant by the Kingdom of Heaven the communal redemption of mankind here on earth, and are willing to make the adventure to help him realize his vision. But there must be no rift, no new sectarianism for the old, for in such a crusade we must have the influence, and the impact, of a united Christianity, using all methods at its command, toiling equally in behalf of a better manhood and a nobler social order.

The best definition of the Church of which I have any knowledge is that by Matthew Arnold: "The Church is a society for promoting goodness." Aye, it is goodness that we need, simple, faithful, intelligent, practical, God-anointed goodness, and nothing else will redeem this troubled, tormented world. The first business of the Church, and the last, is to make good men and women—little brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus who "went about doing

good," blessing the world both by what they do and by what they are—and nothing can take the place of that labor. The best laid plans of social betterment go awry for lack of men and women good enough to make them come true. By the same token, our goodness must be organized and made effective, carrying spiritual-mindedness into public-mindedness, quickening the spiritual quality in men and educating the finer mind of the community. So, and only so, can we bridge that tragic hiatus between the spiritual factor and the practical undertaking, and bring corporate life, no less than individual conduct, under the sway of that fraternal righteousness without which there can be no peace, no security, no happy and fruitful advance of society. To that end the Church must exclude all exclusiveness and invite to its fellowship all good men who believe that there is right worth fighting for, and wrong worth fighting against, and something infinitely higher than themselves, and who, however they may differ in intellectual outlook, feel that they come nearer to God by working and worshiping together in the name of the Eternal Goodness.

Such a Church will indeed be built upon an impregnable Rock, its apostolic commission the task of reproducing the goodness of Jesus—about which there is no debate—whose spirit is the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It will be the body of Christ because it is the altar of his spirit, the fellowship of his faith, the incarnation of his life. The

Church that has not the living Christ as its center and circumference, its Light and Power and Leader, has no future in this modern world astray in its own life and groping for light. No promise is given to a timid Church, a beleaguered Church, a Church defending its creed or apologizing for its gospel. The promise of victory avails only for a Church militant against all evil with the power of overcoming good, storming the final fortress of wrong with the bright armies of a ministrant good-will. To such a Church, and to no other, shall be given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven—the power to batter down the gates of hell and open wide the gates of God to all seeking, doubting, or despairing men of every land.

In a day of confusion and hope, of dismay and promise, when many faint and fall away—loving this present world—let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: "I will build my church!" It is his. He is in it. He will yet have his way with the Church, and with the world. To-day, as of old in the gloaming of the day, he makes as though he would go farther—his gesture an invitation and a challenge to all who love him and labor for his cause. Whether we follow or not, having broken to us the bread of life in our weariness and dejection, as at Emmaus, he will go on to fulfill his errand in the world. Let us follow him, leaving all else behind, out of our littleness into His largeness, joining hands with all who serve in his name in the historic and prophetic fellowship of the Church Immortal.

One family we dwell in him,
  One church, above, beneath:
Though divided by the stream,
  The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God;
  At his command we bow;
Part of his host hath crossed the flood,
  And part is crossing now.

THE WILL TO FELLOWSHIP

PRAYER

Eternal God, humbly we unite our hearts in the fellowship of faith and hope and worship, all praying for each one, seeking together which none may know alone. Thou knowest the things we have need of before we ask; yea, Thou knowest the hard and trying things required for our making, and which we seek to escape. Melt our hardness, deliver us from all cold tempers of the mind, and make us worthy to hear the whisper of Thy spirit.

Many are Thy ways in dealing with us; past finding out the strategy of Thy love, winning us by its beauty, waiting in brooding patience when we wander away. Enter into our minds, O implacable Friend, by that hidden stairway known only to Thyself—mingle in our thoughts, a Presence to purify, a light to lead, a loveliness to transfigure. Teach us in the stillness of Thy sanctuary, tell us the truth for which words were never made.

Send us into the crowded ways of life with hearts of compassion, and eyes to see Thee everywhere, in the beauty of nature, in the nobility of humanity; and, no less, in care-haunted faces, in lives misshapen, and in the cataract of events. Make us servants of Thy holy will, fellow-workers with Thy all-enduring love which we see in the face of Jesus, in whose name we offer our prayer for a life that is life indeed. Amen.

THE WILL TO FELLOWSHIP

"That they all may be one; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." John 17:21.

HEAR now a word from the book of vision: "God hath made of one all nations of men, that they should seek the Lord." Here is the first fact of our humanity, and the last to be discovered, its unity of nature, of need, and of aspiration. Deeper than all human diversities is the spiritual solidarity of mankind. After ages of struggle, tragedy and stupidity, this mighty truth slowly dawns upon our race. Always it has been so. In the human world the will and the truth of God await the developing capacity of man. As Tolstoi said in the title of an unforgettable story, "God sees the truth, but waits," and man tries every road until he finds the one way to go.

To-day, living in a world that has dwindled to the size of a neighborhood, in which races are all drawn together, jammed together, men begin to see that mankind is one family; that the good of a race as a whole does actually exist; that apart from that common good, no race, no nation, can attain to fullness of life; and that we must learn to live together in honor and in peace, or perish together. In spite of cruel enmities and bitter hatreds and age-old

rancors, one may venture to say that the fact of human solidarity has never been more deeply felt than it is to-day. It is the greatest discovery of our age, revealing the advance of man from contact to community, from feud to fraternity.

Such is the manifest will of God as unveiled in our time, which we may read in the facts, forces, ideas, events and movements of our day. Enmities, antipathies and suspicions are still alive and active, and the cataleptic muscular contractions of nations, each trying to huddle within itself, are amazing to behold. None the less, it is written in the book of the purposes of God that all nations are one, and must live ultimately in a unity of fraternal righteousness in a frontierless and unfortified world.

What makes itself plain is that the unity of mankind is not merely physical or economic or social, but spiritual. Our human world is held together not by force, but by an unseen tie that winds through every life, a tether mysterious but stronger than steel. In short, the hope of the world lies in religion as the realization of God and the practice of brotherhood. The danger of the world to-day, as all agree, is not only on its economic but on its spiritual side, in a deep-seated schism in the heart of our civilization. Nor can it be healed save as we mobilize morals and organize society in behalf of a fellowship more inclusive, more creative. To that end, Christianity must be read in the context of the universal religious experience, as a completing, and not merely a competing religion. It is not an interpolation; it is an

interpretation. Just because it is the highest and most far-reaching faith, gathering up and fulfilling the noblest dreams of all faiths, by that very fact it must lead the way towards unity and world fellowship. By the same token, if Christianity cannot realize the will to fellowship in its own life, it will be impotent if not insignificant in a divided and distracted world.

Now, against that background, read the words from the prayer of the Son of Man for his disciples: "That they may all be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Here are tremendous words, in which Jesus makes the proof of his person and the power of his gospel to depend upon the unity and fraternity of his followers. Surely he is dead of soul who can hear that prayer and not be moved by its pathos and its challenge. Read in the light of actual Christian history, it well-nigh smites one mute. The trouble is not that we have failed to take the words of Jesus literally; the trouble is that we have failed to take them seriously. The prayer of Jesus is literally true. The world will never believe in Christ until those who love him love one another well enough to live and toil together in the spirit of his life and the service of his faith. No wonder an intelligent man, after reading a volume on *The Credibility of Christianity,* quietly remarked, "It surely must be a doubtful religion which requires so much learning to prove its credibility." But the proof of Christianity is not learning, it is living. Not logic linked and strong, but a love

strong enough to overcome apathy, antipathy and unkindness; strong enough to melt prejudice and pride of opinion; strong enough to teach men to think and let think; strong enough to discover unities underlying diversities; and above all, to unite willing hands in the service of the better need of men.

Alas! too often the history of the church has been a history of bitter and persistent hatred, of inconceivable bigotry and brutality. What sins, what atrocities are recorded in the annals of the Christian church! Even the sacrament of fellowship, with its symbol of that unutterable reality for which words were never made, has become a shibboleth of separation. No failure of the church has been more pitiful than its failure of fellowship, its bankruptcy of brotherliness. The plain truth is, that while there have been Christians in the church in every age, the church itself has seldom been Christian. The epigram of Dean Milman was justified: "Christianity has been tried for more than eighteen centuries; it is about time that we should try the religion of Jesus."

Happily in our time a better mood and brighter hope prevail, and there are signs that sanity may triumph over schism. Never, one may safely affirm, has there been a more profound yearning for Christian unity, or a deeper sense of its necessity, if the de-christianization of the modern world is to be averted. Once again the facts are the voice of God for such as have ears to hear. Faced by issues such as those which confront us to-day, the old sectarian-

ism is not only inadequate, but absurd. It does not signify; it is a stupendous stupidity. Many are beginning to feel that if it is impossible for men to be united in fellowship in the service of Christ, then Christianity is either an idle dream or an empty legend. None the less, deep in the Christian heart the wish for a larger fellowship has never been so evidently and vividly alive. When the *wish* becomes *will,* where there is a will there is a way to overcome inertia, intellectual differences, and perhaps, by the mercy of God, even the institutional selfishness in which all of us have to share.

Many facts lie back of this movement in the Christian heart. For one thing, the world war was a Golgotha for the church, to be followed, if God will be merciful to our repentance, by a resurrection to new life. Like a gigantic star-shell, such as was so often seen along the front, the glare of the world tragedy lighted up the earth and we discovered the "looped and windowed raggedness" of our civilization, in the midst of which a huddle of sects looked more like a medley than an army. Such doctrines, rites and orders as kept our sects apart meant nothing in those days. Oddly enough, the questions which most interested the men in the trenches were the nature of God, the future life, and the missionary enterprise. The very fact that sectarian issues or superficial theological differences still engaged the attention of the church shows how aloof and remote it is from the actualities of life. Buffeted by ill fortune, beshadowed by bereavement,

crushed by the organized atheism of much of our industrial life, or hard pressed in the lonely trench-fight against moral evil, how can a man so beset have any interest in the question of baptism by much or little water, or the rite of ordination?

There is a passage in one of the letters of the late George Tyrrell, a mystic of Catholic modernism, which makes us see the real issues of the day. This one sentence: "To believe that this terrible machine world is really from God, in God, and unto God, and that through it and in spite of its blind fatality all works for good—that is faith in long trousers." What we need, to face the world of to-day, is faith in long trousers, not a debate in knickerbockers about issues remote from the conditions and problems of human life. The real issue of our time, as a wise teacher has said, is clearly and distinctly drawn between an aristocratic, deterministic, nationalistic outlook and the ethics of the moral freedom, of democracy, of world fellowship. What have the issues which divide our sects to do with that question? Nothing! Less than nothing! As the result of an emphasis upon the importance of unimportant things, we are confronted to-day by an amazing spiritual illiteracy. Meantime, some of us remember the message which the young disciples in Japan sent back to us through Henry Drummond: "Send us no more dogmas; we are tired of them. *Send us Christ.*" Surely, in face of facts such as these, our obligation and our opportunity are alike evident and inevitable.

Augustine of Canterbury was right when he said that if we are to take a world for our parish, we must take a whole Christ for our salvation and a whole church for our fellowship. Exclusiveness must be excluded. No partial thought, no limited vision, will suffice. Henceforth we must think in terms of one humanity and one Christianity, in the assurance that what Christ does, and has done, for individuals he can and will do for society as a whole. "Christianity must go into the wholesale business." For, thank God, at the center of our common faith there is a Personality in loyalty to whom the church can find its unity and the world can find its soul. George Eliot was right: "What we believe divides us; Whom we believe unites us."

According to our faith, so it will be unto us. The cynical attitude to which so many are tempted is fatal to any great, unprecedented advance. And it is an unprecedented advance which requires a heroic part that the church must take to-day, if it would realize its own unity and its service to the world. If we believe—if we really believe—that God is actually present in the fellowship of men who are seeking His kingdom, then the church can be united by the highest and holiest bond—by the Spirit of God Himself. If we but believe this passionately, the way to union is open. The real path to union is not by discussing our differences, but by believing in our unity. At present we are inclined to think our differences more real than our unity, and so long as this is our thought we shall remain apart. The first

step is to believe intensely in the unity of the church through the indwelling of God. Then we shall prove the saying that a belief is what we act upon. We shall act upon unity and in due time ways and means will provide themselves.

Dean Inge, in spite of his pessimism—which is often the reverse side of his moral earnestness—has much wisdom to his credit; but he was never wiser than when he said that there is a deep and true sense in which the unity of the church has never been broken. There is a precious faith, profounder than all our creeds and overarching all our sects, in which we live and move and have our being. It is like the sky above or the river bed below, the flow of our mortal life. Mark Rutherford somewhere reminds us that "we are one in the human, the immense orthodoxy underlying our differences." God is our Father, and men who have God have everything. The vision of God in Christ is a common consecration, and to know him is to have life everlasting. Nay, more; to rediscover this unbroken unity, to reappraise and celebrate this common faith, to realize our fellowship in its sanctity, is the way to unity.

Bossuet, dying, said, "Speak to me of necessary truths." What is necessary? What is essential? "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?" Coleridge stated it in a striking fashion when he said: "In the strictest sense of essential, this alone is essential, that the same spirit should be growing

in us which was in the fullness of all perfection in Christ." Wesley learned that men use many words about religion, but that they are only different expressions for the same blessing. "Why, then," he asked, "so many words and so little charity among Christians about the particular term of a blessing which all share?" Why? One reason is habit, which leads us to feel that our special form of words is better and more sacred than any other. Another reason is pride. Another reason is sheer ignorance, like that of a dear Anglican lady who went home highly indignant after attending a service at the London City Temple, saying, "They actually use *our* Te Deum!"

Joseph Parker, of the City Temple, was wont to keep on his desk a copy of the *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers* to read betimes when he was down at heart and out of conceit. It is a remarkable volume, made up of vivid little autobiographies; artless pages in which heroism is joined with shrewd insight into character and truth, with now and then a touch of rhapsody. In one of its chapters Dr. Parker found a reference to "the sin of making a Christ of our opinions and worshiping it." A whole volume in the phrase, meaning that many folk—let us have a care that we are not among them—who think they are serving Christ are all the while worshiping their own opinions. They follow their own prejudices, mistaking what is habitual to them for what is essential for everybody, and imagine that they are obeying the Master of all. How strange

that we should deify our ideas and interpretations and demand that others accept our dicta if they are to work in our fellowship, in the enterprise of Christ! Every man has a right to his opinion, or we may allow him to have it whether he has any right to it or not. But the worship of opinion is not the worship of God, whose cause is more precious than all our petty prejudices or predilections.

Toleration is not enough; we must have insight, understanding, appreciation. It is the quality of the spiritual mind that it penetrates to the core of things and finds division changed into a variety that does not lack unity. Perhaps we ought to do away with the word "division" and use, instead, after the manner of Horace Bushnell, the word "distribution" of the church. Anyway, identity of sentiment with difference of opinion John Stirling discovered to be the first requisite of happy company. And it is also a requisite of Christian fellowship, as well as a need for the life of the church. Difference is the soul of life and health, and not the barren oneness that weak souls crave. What we want is not uniformity, but fellowship; not "a mush of concession," as Emerson described it, much less a mere agglomeration in which historic loyalties and varieties of witness are erased in a blur of ambiguity. Not at all. Differences are unhappy only when they sharpen tempers and mar fellowship. Let us keep all our traditions, and reckon them holy, but let us also keep in our hearts the words of the Lord Jesus, "Ye do make the will of God of no effect by your traditions."

A great scholar of Scotland, a recent guest in America, told of an interview he had during the war with Thomas Masaryk, one of the few really great men of our time, my honored parishioner at the City Temple during his exile in England. After listening to the story of Christian unity in Scotland, and the advance made towards it, Masaryk asked two questions, in which he revealed a directness and simplicity of thought not unlike that of Lincoln. The first question was this: "Is the desire for Christian unity the result of a deepening or a shallowing of the religious life?" The second question was of like kind: "What do you propose to do with a united church?"

Those two questions go to the root of the matter. Unity merely for the sake of unity may be idle and useless. The desire for unity indicates, if not a deepening, at least a broadening of religious life, a longing for larger realizations and applications of spiritual power. But there must be deepening of the spiritual life, too, else unity may be feeble and thin. In passion our fathers parted; only in a profounder passion can we be welded together. Without a deeper life of the spirit a united church may mean only the regimentation of Christianity, if not a regulation or a suppression of thought. As when there is a huge business merger, it is nearly always followed thereafter by a diminution of output. What do we propose to do? If we mean to use a united church to heal a broken world, to reveal love where now there is hate, to melt bitter racial rancors

which have in them the seeds of innumerable wars —to heal the malady of war itself, to lead the way towards a more humane social order, and to send the light of the gospel into the dark corners of the earth—then God will prosper our undertaking and make it a Pentecost of Brotherhood. But if any lesser motive lurk behind, his winds will not blow nor his tides flow.

Some of us are in dire plight in respect of the church as it is. The church calls us with many voices, and every voice is a memory. We cannot leave it and we can hardly remain in it, though we are willing enough to tolerate even the sermon-saturated pagans in its pews. We are at home in every sect and able to speak the dialect of each, just because our solitary concern is with what they have in common. Yet we are unhappy, ill at ease, looking and longing and praying for a church of Christ, who never laid stress on a little issue in all his life. Yet we cling to the church like that old New England Puritan who, when he was excommunicated, refused to go out. For twenty-five years he came to every communion service and brought a little bit of wine and bread of his own. There, in the security of his high pew, he communed with the church in spite of the deacon. When a man brings his own communion, who can say him nay? So some of us commune with the church of every name, in spite of its petty issues that seem to us to mean nothing, in spite of its archaic methods which have long gone by, in spite of its theological museum. We commune with the

church because it is the great historic fellowship of the seekers and finders of God, and we have nowhere else to go.

After all, what is Christianity? It is neither a narrow orthodoxy fortified by intellectual obscurantism, nor is it an easy-going liberalism which ends in indifference and futility. One text tells it all: "God, who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What is the basis on which men seeking goodness may unite, that all may share the faith of each and each may share the faith of all, that together they may know what none may know alone? "This solid foundation God hath laid, and this is the inscription: 'The Lord knoweth who are His; let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from evil.'" Realities must rule. First things must come first. We must take men as we find them, with such faith as they have, and not blame them for having a weak faith or a confused outlook; but, being taught of God in our own hearts, help to lift them and to lift ourselves into a more radiant faith in the goodness of God.

Christianity is love or it is nothing, and love is the only way to unity. The business of the church is to teach men to look upon life as Jesus looked upon it—to be disciples of his purity, his courage, his sympathy, his cross, his divine magnanimity, and send them out into the world to be little brothers of the Lord Christ.

What if the church should actually heed this call and assemble, as of old, in a great council, not to legislate but to listen in the place of hearing, the better to know the will of God and how to do His work? What if the leaders of the church should foregather, not to argue, not to patch up some platform on which to unite, but to seek to know the mind of Christ? Suppose we should go to such an assembly, not with our minds made up before, not as those who dicker for victory of opinion, but actually to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit and learn what He would have us do? Who can tell what might not be revealed to us concerning the will of God for our beshadowed time when we are groping our way in the dark? The early church settled great matters in this manner, and therefore it was permitted them to say what we should be able to say simply and sincerely: "It seemed good to the spirit of God and to us."

THE FINAL CHURCH

PRAYER

Eternal Father, in whose fellowship there is health and holiness and happiness, by whose love we have life and in whose grace we have hope, purify our thoughts with the breath of Thy presence. Grant us the spirit of worship, that the deepest yearning of our being may be ennobled by the power of faith and exalted by the sanctity of reason into the majesty of prayer. Free us from the narrow, lonely lives we live into a larger, freer, more abundant life—a holy communion of mortals in the immortal life.

Spirit of Holiness, kindle in us a flame of pure aspiration, to consume all grosser passions; a light to shine upon our way and, if it may be, to make the paths of others less dark. In the midst of hurrying days and the ever-shifting human scene, teach us how to live in the sanctuary of the Eternal. When death passes by, leaving a hush on our homes, show us the brightness on the other side of life. Let not the glitter and hardness of ~~a great ci~~ty blind us to that dear city of God where all souls shall assemble.

Fill our minds with wisdom, our hearts with tenderness, and our hands with usefulness. Take all reluctance out of our obedience, all bitterness out of our endurance, and let Thy laws become songs in the house of our pilgrimage. Unite us with all lovers of goodness, and give us courage and faithfulness to follow the ways of Thy spirit. To Thy loving-kindness we offer our prayer, in the name of Him who walked the road of the loving heart. Amen.

THE FINAL CHURCH

"And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Luke 21 : 5, 6.

"I saw the Holy City, and I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. 21 : 2, 22.

LOWELL in his essay on Dryden sums up the moral tragedy of the poet in these words: "Thrice unhappy he who, born to see things as they might be, is yet schooled by circumstances to see them as people say they are—to read God in a prose translation." By this process a prophet becomes a preacher, and a seer sinks to the level of a singer of songs that tinkle and tickle in the ears of men. Here is the way to popularity, but no popular preacher can be an honest man, much less a prophet of God. A popular leader, said Napoleon, must be "a dealer in hope," regardless of facts. He must have a dim eye for realities and a vivid, optimistic imagination. Truth frightens us, and we like our spiritual doctors to have a good bedside manner, giving us pills with a thick sugar-coating.

No wonder the mighty prophets of old were so unpopular; they were both seers and sayers. They

would have a hard time to-day unless, "schooled by circumstances," they learned to subdue their visions and soften their tones. The prophet, if he be a poet, has the awful gift of double-vision: he sees the thing as it is with a terrible intensity, but he also sees the thing as it ought to be, and will be—uniting an austere realism with a heavenly idealism. And what he sees he says, regardless of circumstances or consequences. If he speaks at a religious assembly he does not receive loud applause. He made us feel as if we were wearing a hair shirt, and hair shirts are not for the order of saints to which we belong. We denounce him as a pessimist. If a man "schooled by circumstances" is on the program, it is different. He is greeted with acclaim, and we go home wrapped in cotton wool, cushioned in complacency. We do not like men to see too much—it makes us uncomfortable.

Jesus was a prophet as well as a poet—the Mt. Everest of a range of moral genius running through Hebrew history. His personal fascination, his incomparable power of speech, must not blind us to the awful sense of the Unseen, and of the out-working of eternal laws, which underlies the beauty of his teaching. The disciples asked Jesus to look at the Temple, lofty, spacious, richly adorned. Stately in the sunlight, or touched by the mysticism of the night, it was beautiful. Its ritual was elaborate, its ceremonial imposing. They loved it. They were proud of it. We have nothing to help us to realize what it meant to them. An Englishman in West-

minster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral—old, gray homes of the spirit, each a national shrine and a focus of faith—would better know what was in the hearts of the disciples as they looked at the Temple.

Jesus loved the Temple, too. With what eager and glowing spirit he entered it as a boy, his heart full of dreams, his mind haunted by its history! It was the altar of the people of his fathers—what memories, what poetries, what aspirations, clustered about it! Yet he looked not only at the things which are seen, but also at the things which are Unseen; he saw those impalpable forces the attrition of which, he knew, would shatter the Temple and destroy it. He saw beyond the day, behind the fleeting visible scene; he saw the whole vast tragedy of his people—the besieging Roman armies, the city battered down, the Temple a charred and smoking ruin, the people slain or fleeing into the mountains! What an apocalypse of calamity upon the place and people he loved! What must have been in his heart when, as he paused to look at the Temple, he said: "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come in which there shall not be left one stone upon another." The Temple was not the final Church.

Time out of mind, and with every variation of motive and accent, we have heard it said: "The Church must go." Voltaire said it with a scintillating satire, and Zola in *Travail* wished to see the last of the Church, as did Tolstoi. But that Jesus could say it of his Father's House, and at the very moment when he witnessed the idyl of the widow and

her mite, gives us pause. But where Voltaire saw only rubbish littering the site of the Church, Jesus saw the scaffolding of a new, uprising Church, wider in its fellowship and more Divine in its spirit. The Temple was a national shrine, and no national Church can be final. As well try to shut up spring in a garden or winter in a woodshed. Of course, each race, each nation, will give characteristic expression to the religious life, but religion is larger and wider than race or nation. Years ago *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* put it in this way:

"It must be done, Sir! It must be done. Our religion has been Judaized, it has been Orientalized, it has been Romanized, it has been Anglicized, and the time is at hand when it must be Americanized. Now, Sir, you see what Americanizing is in politics; it means that a man shall vote because he is a man, and shall vote for whom he pleases, without his neighbor's interference. Just so a man's soul has a vote in the spiritual community; and it doesn't do, Sir, or it won't do long, to call him a schismatic and heretic and those other wicked names that the murderous Inquisitors have left us to help along peace and good-will among men. It won't be long, Sir, before we have an Americanized religion as we have an Americanized government, and then, Sir, every soul God sends into the world will be good in the face of all men for just so much of His inspiration as giveth him understanding."

Yes, there is a point in that passage. Religion takes new forms and a new interpretation in terms of democracy, but the Religion of Democracy is not

final. Our Americanism needs to be spiritualized, but to make it a religion, as has been the tendency since the World War, is fatal. Washington and Lincoln are noble figures—worthy to stand alongside the mighty spirits of the ancient world—but to make them saints of a national Church is to repeat an old error on a gigantic scale. To-day, as never before, a great host of elect Christian youth—alert, spiritually alive, forward-looking—are torn by the tragedy of clashing loyalties, unable to reconcile nationalism with the universalism of Jesus. Their instinct is sound; their insight is authentic. Unless we seek *first* the Kingdom of Heaven, the compulsion of lesser loyalties ends in an inversion of values. Jesus struck the universal note. In his gospel the ideal of race, of nation, purified by fire, became an election to service. Alas, because his nation misread its true destiny, and knew not the hour of its visitation, it fell, and its people became wanderers upon the earth.

As the expansive, explosive power of religion can not be identified with the ideal of nationalism, so it can not be shut up with a dogma or a form, as the Pharisees tried to do. My friend Montefiore, the Jewish scholar and saint of London, holds that Jesus was unjust to the Pharisees, and untrue to his own teaching in dealing with them. He seemed willing to forgive everybody except his priestly critics, whom he denounced without measure, lifting his voice almost to a shriek. Why was it so? To individual Pharisees he was charming and kind, but to the ideal

of Phariseeism he was utterly intolerant. Nor is the reason far to seek. The Hebrew Church was the keeper of a precious insight, the vision of the unity, spirituality and holiness of God, which it sought to preserve amidst all apostasies and pollutions. But its passion to keep the faith became a mere preservatism, and defeated itself. Its narrowness and exclusiveness ended in spiritual death, and had to be broken by the hammer of God. Jesus sought to save the soul of the ancient faith, and the blindness of the Pharisees stood in the way.

Alas, a like fate befell his own religion. On Greek soil its fresh wonder became an elaborate philosophy; in Rome it petrified into a vast ecclesiasticism. Always it is so. When an inspiration is organized into an institution—when a rapture becomes a ritual—the loss is inevitable and appalling. Here is the old dilemma, the eternal warfare between mysticism and institutionalism, between prophet and priest. Both are necessary. Without form the spirit becomes a disembodied ghost, but when form—whether it be dogma or ritual—hardens, the spirit is lost. The two must be kept in tension, as Shaw argues in his preface to *Saint Joan* with clear insight. Forgetting this truth, the imperial Church of the Middle Ages was not the final Church. It had to go, shattered alike by the invading Spirit of God and the uprising passion of humanity. Again, the hammer of God broke down the barriers within which men sought to imprison the free, pilgrim spirit of faith.

Is Protestantism the final Church? God forbid! It fills one with dismay to think of a stereotyped sectarianism, ending in a barren stony orthodoxy and a dead polemical dogmatism. Already our sectarianism is obsolete. It is disintegrating before our eyes. Well-built dividing walls are tumbling down, making gaps big enough for a tourist elephant with baggage to pass through.

> "Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
> That wants it down."

It is the Spirit of God, the spirit of unity, of fellowship, of adventure, and unless we follow it darkness will descend upon us. There is hardly a single sect whose original reason for being is valid to-day, or whose central insight has any relation to the issues of our time. It is a new world in which we live, with new insights, new outlooks, and we need an altogether other dimension of religion—the unity of things which differ, and "the eye of a fresh mind upon our tangled time."

What of the future? Three theories have been held respecting the future of the Church, the first being that it has no future. There is to be no such thing as the universal spread of the Gospel. The Church is not to wax but wane. The Church, in the terms of this theory, is wholly supernatural, eternally a stranger in the world, and not in any sense to be established on earth. Its life is a perpetual death and resurrection. It has nothing to do with the

world but to condemn it. It exists on earth to save a few out of the wreck, leaving the rest to go as ordained. Happily this view of the Church is now held to be wholly alien to the fundamental spirit and purpose and passion of the life of Jesus, as well as with the character of God as he revealed it.

The second theory—held by the early Church in its time of terrible trial—is that the power of good and the power of evil will alike increase. "Let *both* grow together until the harvest," was the word of our Lord. Augustine taught that however the leaven of the Gospel may spread, the power of evil will wax both in malignity and ingenuity. It was all told in that one dread word seldom spoken now—Anti-Christ, a spirit ruthless, merciless, crafty, deceiving even the very elect. Iniquity will abound and the love of many will become cold until, at last, the final issue of history will be the ultimate clash of these forces in a desperate battle of Armageddon, in the dire crisis of which Christ himself will appear to turn the tide of battle and save the elect. This vision of the future—dramatic, cinematographic, apocalyptic—is still widely held in our day, and is the background of much of the controversy recently agitating the Church.

There is, thirdly, the theory of hope, the theory that in manifold ways, some apparent and some hidden, the Kingdom of God is coming, and will come. Now suddenly, now slowly, the forces of evil are being beaten back, and in the end evil will be defeated or merged into the good, because greater

is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Back of this theory lies the faith that God is in His world, not outside of it, and that He has not lost control of it. The forces of evil are terrible, but not too terrible for the purity and power of God to overcome. Such is our faith, and such our high-hearted hope. We do not know that it is true. We can not prove it. Many facts, and not a few words of the Bible, seem to be against it. None the less we hold it, stand by it, believe it, fighting, struggling —aye, suffering, if need be—learning thereby how much we must depend upon God, and how surely He is to be trusted.

The Final Church! Aye, there is no final Church upon this earth, and never can be. We follow a flying ideal, disciples of a Pilgrim Christ. Truly did our Yankee Plato tell us, God hath given us the choice between truth and repose. They seek in vain who hope to find finality of form or fixity of thought in a world the basic law of which is change, growth, the unfolding purpose of Creative Love. Like the disciples at Emmaus, sad and weary, we invite the journeying Christ to abide with us, though he "made as though he would have gone further." He will abide with us for a brief time—long enough to bless the bread of our fellowship—but if we would abide with him, we must be pilgrims, too, walking where no path is, adventuring into new lands and strange times—unafraid because we are led by One who knows the way amid shifting and incalculable times, and will not betray the faith and love we give him.

When the world seemed breaking up and falling to pieces, the Christian seer beheld aloft the far-shining City of God, untouched by the miseries and mutations of time. But he saw no Temple in it, because the City itself was a Temple, and the Lord God the light of it. The Church exists to pass away, but God remaineth—God Himself the Final Church in whose love all souls are redeemed, and in whose fellowship they have life everlasting. God is the meaning of the universe, the salvation of humanity, and the final home of the soul.

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

PRAYER

Thou Ancient of Days, with whom there is no past and no future, we whose times are in Thy hand lift up our hearts, giving thanks for Thy eternal goodness. Naked are our souls before Thee, O Lord; clothe us with the beauty of holiness and the garment of praise. Make us to know that Spirit with spirit may meet in the fellowship of prayer. Draw us near to Thyself and then we shall not be far from one another, offering our prayer with one heart and one mind, with simple faith and sincere love.

At the end of a year that has been full of dark mysteries that baffle our faith, we come to Thee for cleansing and comfort, for help and healing. For many things we give thanks; for many things—oh, so many—we ask forgiveness; and for the sorrows that break our hearts we beseech Thee for courage and patience to wait for Thy further revelation. Lord, we have gone astray; bring us back by the severity of Thy love, and grant us that purity of spirit that is more than wisdom.

Help us, our Father, to make the New Year a Christian year, rich in realizations of the truth as it is in Jesus; new indeed in its growth in the life of vision and service. Amid the changing and flowing of days may we look up to the Eternal, and find that peace which the world can neither give nor take away. Grant us a short New Year, if so it may be, because sorrow makes the time so long and the feet of the days so slow. Whatever be Thy will, may we serve Thee faithfully till the shadows flee away and we awake in Thy likeness. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

"The time is at hand." Rev. 1:6.

ONCE again the journeying days have brought us to the anniversary of the Beginning and the End. Time may be a fiction, but its passing makes us thoughtful if we ponder the strange ways of God and the slow unfolding of His will. For many the year that is dead was full of hope and joy and forward-looking thoughts; for many its date divides the days into before and after, and life will never again be the same. For all peoples in all lands it has been a year of trial and alarm, of rancor and reaction, and its wingless, crawling days have left a mark upon the human spirit forever. Not one of us but will join in the prayer of the young poet whose life had in it the pathos of unfinished things:

In the wilds of life astray,
  Held far from our delight,
Following the cloud by day
  And the fire by night,
Came we a desert way.
  O Lord, with apples feed us,
With flagons stay!
  By Thy still waters lead us.

Over the New Year—over the near-by to-morrow—God has mercifully drawn a cloud, and let us

thank Him for it. Probably not one of us is brave enough to go through the year if we knew all that it is to bring, and could see it all at once. As George Eliot has shown us in her story of *The Lifted Veil,* the future would lose its fascination if we knew its happenings in advance. But God is gracious. He does not ask us to live all of life at once, but only one day at a time; and He gives us manna for the day—each day its duty and its daily bread, in answer to the morning prayer. And we may be sure that the future is based, not upon astrology or forecasting, but upon something far better; upon the old workings of Law, the deep things of human feeling, and the unchanging Word of God.

King Solomon was afflicted with a sense of the tedium of life, its weary routine, its deadening monotony: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." Even so, but it is a wise repetition, a wonderful monotony, and life would fall into chaos if it were not so. If what happened yesterday did not happen to-day; if the sun rose in a new place, and the law of gravitation took a new form; if everything were upset every day—there would be no certainty, no security, no calculation. Our institutions, our very life, rest upon the assurance of regularity and faithfulness in the natural and human order. Youth is all fire and adventure and wants to turn things upside down; but riper years make one grateful for the uniformity of human experience, and the very same-

ness of our lot, instead of being a weariness or a vexation, is a comfort, a joy. "The thing that has been shall be"—that is, the wise old order under which our fathers lived and died is the same order under which we live. As we read from Thackeray, in a passage which had many erasures, Dr. Brown tells us, before it was made perfect:

"Another Finis, another slice of life which *Tempus edax* has devoured! I may have to write the word once or twice, perhaps, and then an end of Ends. Oh, the troubles, the cares, the *ennui,* the repetitions, the old conversations over and over again, and here and there all the delightful passages, the dear, brief, the forever-remembered! A few chapters more, and then the last, and behold Finis itself coming to an end, and the Infinite beginning."

All history is contemporary history, said Benedetto Croce. The Past is always with us, all the Past, a volume of precedents, a dictionary of definitions, a book of wisdom to which we may turn for advice as to the present and the future. So when To-morrow arrives, bringing its difficulty, we can turn the volume over again and find the page where we met a great trouble, and read the entry: "Got through it; not so bad as I thought—taught me many things." The book of the Past is a record of difficulties that turned out to be not so difficult—like Peter in prison, and the Iron Gate that opened when he came right up to it. It is a story of struggles that came to an end, a prophecy of long nights that were always followed by mornings. It tells of

bitter herbs, but also of the wisdom that was distilled from them. If we have read wisely the teaching of the years, we shall trust experience, as David did: "Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth." There will be no cowardice, no fear, no despair; and we may begin each New Year with confidence, knowing, as a wise poet has said:

> Time goes, you say; ah, no,
> Alas, time stays; we go.

Lorado Taft, our idealist sculptor, sees no melancholy in those lines, which he has made the theme of a great sculptural group called "The Fountain of Time." It shows the heroic figure of Time overlooking the vast, hurrying procession of mankind. Out of a jet of water rise infant forms, who turn their childish footsteps after the youths and maidens that have preceded them. In the center of the long column are warriors, horsemen, strong men and beautiful women, all marching forward with heads erect and banners floating. Beyond them are the bending shoulders of the aged and the halting footsteps of those who are about to sink back to the earth from which they came. But all, all—the children, the youths, the heros, and the grandsires, every one—are gazing forward toward some goal they can not see. This vision it is that keeps them marching, and for it, we may be sure, Time envies them their eternity. It is not the brief cycle

of the body, dust to dust, but this long straight line of vision, that makes the group a work of prophetic genius; not the dust rising and falling in a transient cloud, but the spirit that endures as seeing that which is invisible—man the unconquerable, man the explorer of eternity!

Now listen. Into meditations such as these the text breaks like a clap of thunder: "The time is at hand!" There is a sense of immediacy, of moral urgency in it, an eager, insistent expectation, as of impending revelations and long-looked-for disclosures. It is impetuous, almost impatient, throbbing with new impulses and nameless prophecies. Such is the spirit of the Christian Year, which lives not in the Past, but in the Eternal Present, as if to-day were only a tiny measured part of that Eternity in which we live now and always. Over the calm of our philosophical musings it casts the light, the glow, the color of a new life and a new day. It moves swiftly, joyously, with the passion of youth, in a world of lengthening vistas and lifting skies, toward a goal such as man has hardly dared to dream. It is a herald approaching, bringing tidings of incredible happenings about to transpire: "The time is at hand."

Nor is the secret far to seek. Christmas Day was the birth, not only of a Child in a Manger, but of a new, living, all-transfiguring idea of God and man, and life and death and destiny. Truly has it been said that the very idea of God was reborn with the Nativity of Christ—God revealed in His humanity,

His awful humility, His tender holiness, in a universe where the moral law is supreme and the Sermon on the Mount is the Magna Charta of mankind. Hence a new joy breathing upon the weary, troubled life of man, with its "sad, wise valor," a quickening thrill of great expectations; a spirit of morning freshness and grace stirring the leaves of the Tree of Life. Hence, also, a transvaluation of life, and, by the same token, a consecration of time. Life is not only different, but dearer and deeper, its days more precious, its years more revealing, since Jesus lived. It strikes a deeper root. It bears a richer fruit. It moves to a profounder, more haunting rhythm, with a loftier and more prophetic cadence.

Our civil year, which divides time into days and months and years, has its uses for reckoning and for reference. But the Christian Year, because it is "the eternal life lived in time by the strength and under the eyes of God," follows a higher chronology. It has another scale of value, making use of the days to fulfill the likeness of Christ by fellowship and service. The uses of the civil year end at death; but the Christian Year links us to the ageless life, telling us that our eternity begins, not at death, but at birth. In all ages moralists have laid stress on the value of time, but no teachers have ever emphasized its everlasting importance like Jesus and his apostles. Jesus himself went swiftly on his errand through the world, and the Epistles teem with exhortations as to the religious value of time. They

tell us to redeem the time, buy it up—literally, "get a corner on it"—and that after we put on Christ we must live no longer after the flesh, but after the spirit. Thus the duty of the wise economy of time, of its husbanding, is one of the first truths of our faith.

Nor is there a better way of using the seasons of the year, making them seasons of the soul, than by following the events and festivals of the Christian Year. Of course, such a plan is older than Christianity, as we know from the Hebrew Calendar, to name no other, and it thus has the value of ages of experience. Even as a scheme of spiritual pedagogy it is wise. Only it must be wisely used—not slavishly, not as mere routine, but reverently, and with the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. If it did nothing more than put habit on the side of the culture of faith it would justify itself. But it does more than that, much more, not only giving us a chronology of the heart, but uniting us in a holy pilgrimage through the year following him who, in the shortest time, wrought the greatest work. Its advantages are obvious enough, but it is worth while to point them out for the sake of emphasis, the better to call attention to a matter of great importance that is sorely neglected in our day.

For one thing, the Christian Year links us with the historic reality of the Life of Christ. Too often and too easily men come to think of Christianity as a mere philosophy, a system of truth, or a code of ethics, like that of Confucius or some other. It is

all these things, but much more. It is no vague, dream idealism hovering over history, like a mist drifting over the Scottish hills. It is rooted in historical realities, its Founder having a place in time and a date in history. It is no myth, no gentle, dream-woven legend too fair and frail ever to have been real. No; it is a dream actually come true, a biography in which the Eternal Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Once at least, in a life truly and richly human, our humanity has seen its ideal realized, giving a new date to time and marking a new era in the history of the soul. Therefore, by following those Footsteps through the year, faith walks with a firmer tread, and the passing days become a curriculum for the culture of the inner life. How fruitful such a Calendar is for meditation, and how wisely it may be used, has been shown us many times, as in the stanzas of Keble's *Christian Year*.

There is a further advantage, not to be overlooked by those who would see the Christian life steadily and see it whole. Our journey from Advent to the Ascension leads us over a wide expanse of truth and through a rich variety of experience, so that we are saved alike from narrowness of outlook and from the whims of individual idiosyncrasy. Nearly every heresy has been due, not to perversity, but to a lack of proportion, one truth being emphasized to the neglect of other truths equally true and equally important. In the same way Calvin and Arminius each held a precious truth, but to take one and leave

the other is to lose the poise of faith. Every great preacher has one aspect of truth that is nearer to his heart than any other, and his temptation is to make it central and supreme. With Munger it was the Pity of Christ, upon which he brooded until, toward the end, he seemed to wear the very beauty of the Master in his character. But he was too wise, too much aware of the balance of truth, to emphasize even that gracious truth to the neglect of other aspects of the many-sided Christ. Thus the Calendar of the Christian Year, if used aright, helps us to keep that fullness and sanity of faith which is needed for a full-orbed and happy religious life.

Also, it offers us a definite method for the culture of faith and the practice of salvation. One grave defect of our religious life is a lack of specific purpose and method, which of itself is quite enough to account for much of our penury of faith, without resort to intellectual doubt. Wesley was first called a Methodist because he and his friends pursued a method of holy living. St. Bernard, not less than Wesley, preached the goodly gospel of free grace, but he did not feel that it exempted him from the habit and necessity of austere living. Nor did Wesley, who all his life was wont to fast every Friday all the year round—not that he attached any merit or magic to the habit, but because he found it an aid to the spiritual life. When one thinks of that heroic figure, athletic both in body and soul, and the wonder of his evangel which saved England from revolution, one must not forget the stern cul-

ture of soul which made it possible. My point is not that we should imitate Wesley in this matter or in any other—though he has much to teach us—but that we should have a method, a habit, a plan for the culture of faith. Often one wonders that men have any faith at all, so little care do they take to nurture it and keep it alive.

Wherefore do we seek a stronger faith and a more satisfying experience of things immortal? Surely not alone for our own ease, or comfort, or triumph over the things that beset us, but also to make the Will of Christ prevail among men. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," said Jesus, with the same instant and compelling accent of the text; always at hand, hovering over us, ready to be revealed in a Great Society—even the City of God on earth—and it is to make that City "not merely a vision, but a home," that we seek new realizations of spiritual power and moral conquest. For example, the day has come when the world must ground arms! There has been talk enough and to spare; it is time to act. Fine sentiments about peace are of no avail if we go on piling up guns and making threats of bigger navies. Timidly, tentatively, the people are learning to sit together in conclave, taking counsel for the common good, but when proposals of disarmament are made they are put forward into an undated future. Such a policy is historically idiotic. "The time is at hand!" If we are to make the New Year Christian, we must mobilize the finer mind of hu-

manity, muster its moral power, in behalf of a better world order.

Not alone to dethrone the horrible gods of war, but to build a more humane industrial order, and a more Christian Church, we need the power of a mighty faith. At the end of a dark year, full of bitterness and confusion, let us give ourselves anew to Him whose we are, and who will give Himself to us if we open our hearts. How better can we begin a New Year than by beginning a new life? What the sad world needs is a new mind, a new spirit, new leaders with new enthusiasms and new visions—let us seek Him who can make us equal to these high demands. So, and only so, can we make our lives count for the cause of God in the world, and bring down to the Gate in the Mist somewhat that is of abiding worth. If to-morrow is to be better than yesterday, it will be because each of us puts into our fleeting lives more of the spirit of Christ, his great brotherly heart, his tireless labor of love, his love of man and his faith in God.

From the silence of Time
  Time's silence borrow;
In the heart of To-day
  Lies the world of To-morrow,
And the builders of joy
  Are the children of sorrow.

WINNING OUR SOULS

PRAYER

O Divine Redeemer, who inhabitest eternity and dwellest with the gentle and pure of heart, make Thyself real to those who seek Thee to-day. In the busy world, and in our beating hearts, there is a dumb cry for Thee, and men wander to and fro listening for Thy footsteps. Lo, Thou art here, the inspiration of our faith and its justification; in the need that brings us together and in the fellowship that unites us in the sacrament of song and praise.

Lord, in every home Thou standest waiting to be welcomed, in every heart wanting to be known and trusted. Take all veils from our eyes that we may see that in every true deed Thy light shines, and in every moral choice Thou art revealed. Show us that in the common life Thou art near, in hearts that yearn, in minds that seek the truth, in love and duty reconciled. Teach us to know Thee in the revelation without words that moves in daily things.

Enter in and possess our hearts, O Lord, make our inner life a sanctuary of Thy presence. Purify us of fear, of bitter memories of mistakes, of unworthy desires, till our hearts adore and wonder and rise to claim a power and joy we have not known. Heal our sorrows; grant us great solving words; make us to know that the opening of our hearts and Thy entering are one moment. Make us experts in the doing of good, as he was in whose name we pray. Amen.

WINNING OUR SOULS

"In your patience ye shall win your souls." Luke 22: 19.

ST. FRANCIS, it is said, looked upon the people who gathered to hear him preach not as men and women, but as a company of human souls. He cared not for the robe of the prince or the rags of the beggar, but only to discern the work of God in the soul, a work always going on, always important, as various as the infinite varieties of men, as urgent as their needs, as continuing as the return of night and day. In the same way "St. Socrates," as Erasmus called him, spent his time in nothing else but persuading men, young and old alike, not to take thought for their persons or their property, "but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul." Thus both saint and sage agreed that life has meaning and worth only when it has reference to the soul and its unfolding; to which we may add the witness of a great man of science who has told us that "to develop soul is progress," and there is no other progress.

Here lies the secret of the Gospel of Christ, with its awful warnings and its eternal hopes, as we should see if the film of sense were removed from our eyes. If Jesus were standing on Broadway he

would see the never-ending flow of humanity as a procession of human souls, glad, sad, weary, baffled, hoping, dreaming—haunted by fear, stained by sin, heavy with sorrow, troubled by doubt, wistfully seeking what is found in this world in no satisfying quantity. But he would see more than we do, finding not a few, unnoted by others, growing capable of all that heaven is. No wonder it is said of him, when he saw a great multitude, that "he was moved with compassion toward them," seeing how weary and heavy laden they are, forever seeking without finding. He knew that humanity is deeply wounded somewhere, and he sought to heal it. He saw the souls of men growing or dying under the hard discipline of the world, and his whole being went out to them in a yearning love. He knew what Ruskin meant when he said: "I am not surprised at what men suffer, but I am surprised at what they miss."

Hence the challenge of this text, which the Revised Version restores to its original force, making the soul not a treasure to be kept but a trophy to be won. The older version read: "In your patience possess ye your souls," and the change, if seemingly slight, is yet so important that Bishop Wescott thought all the work of the revisers well spent had the only result been to secure this change. It is the difference between life as a possession and life as an adventure, with all the risk and peril and zest of adventure; and that is everywhere the attitude of Jesus. Too often his religion has been made a soft and cushioned faith, a refuge for the weak, the timid,

the devout and retiring, a shelter of frail and lovely things. No, no; it is an appeal to the heroism of youth, a quest to stir the heart and make it beat faster; not a stick of candy but a bugle call. Literally the word used by Jesus in this text means, "Procure for yourselves souls," as if the soul were, in some real sense, not merely an inheritance, but a purchase, an achievement. Of course we need not press a single word too far in our interpretation, but the active verb employed by Jesus is very significant; and it opens the gate to an inviting inquiry into which it is worth our while to enter, if only to feel the thrill and urgency of his appeal.

At first sight it is a little startling to be told that we do not so much possess souls as win them; it reminds one of the saying of Browning that he believed in the immortality of the soul "where a soul can be discerned." We are accustomed to think of our souls as the gifts of God bequeathed to us through "the mystic continuities of inheritance;" and that is no doubt true. What Jesus meant is that this seed of immortality, this germ of the Eternal, is a prophecy of the soul, a dim anticipation of personality to be fulfilled by the growth, struggle, and fruition of life—like a brown bulb in the springtime which has in it the possibility of the lily. Either it will unfold in great and glowing qualities or wither into secret hardness in the midst of the years. Jesus knew that a man may gain the whole world—its wealth, its applause, its homage—and yet lose something fine and high and lovely to win which the world

were well lost. Mark well; in the text he is not speaking to hard, sinful men, but to his disciples who are to go as the heralds of his gospel to the ends of the earth. "In your patience ye shall win your souls," he said, telling them at the same time that they would face trial, danger, and death. St. Paul knew the peril of his high calling, and how those who seek to save others may themselves be lost. O my soul, remember!

What a commentary on this text is open for our reading in the sad knowledge forced upon us by the daily record of the world. Nothing is sadder or more disheartening than to meet a man who twenty years ago was a youth aglow with the enthusiasm of high ideals—the light of morning in his face, the birds singing in his heart—and find him hard, cold, cynical. What is still sadder is that he thinks he has become wise, whereas he has only become crass. He set his teeth and fought hard, and in the process he has kept his soul alive so far as work and resolution go, but the iron has entered into it. Or he has failed to attain his aims, and is querulous, sour, embittered. The early dream has vanished, and there has gone with it much that was fragrant and hopeful and believing. How often a man of whom great things were expected becomes petty, cruel and small in his selfishness. At thirty, at fifty, those who knew him as a boy speak with a sigh of the man he might have been. Some secret sin, some inner betrayal, some ignoble ambition, has dissolved the Pearl of great price. Thus a man capable of the vision of a

statesman enters the race for office—and shrivels to the size of a politician! Another man endowed by God to be a prophet of the soul shrinks until he is only an ecclesiastic! This is the great tragedy—that youth rules the world when it is no longer young, and its idealism is dim. What could we not do on this earth if youth had more wisdom and age had more dreams!

Let us turn from this darker side and ask the question, How can we win our souls? For one thing, we must make up our minds to accept life as it is—with its risks, its tasks, its bereavements, its benedictions—as an opportunity for the making of a soul; or, as Browning would say, our "chance of learning love." Otherwise we can make no sense out of it at all. If this world of ours were meant for joy alone, it is a failure; if it were meant for smug well-being, it is a foolishness; but if it be meant for a place in which by struggle we can grow strong, and by fighting evil we can win the good, it is the peer of any star. Carlyle sneered at Margaret Fuller because she said, in her happy, buoyant manner, "I accept the universe!" But she was wiser than he. If he ever did accept it, he did so sullenly, grudgingly, not heartily. Not many of us do accept it altogether. Most men are atheists in spots. Joseph Parker said that he had always "an atheism within a theism," an area sometimes large, sometimes small, over which God seemed not to rule. It was like that corner of the field which in Scotland used to be left to grow up in weeds, which they called Goodman's

Croft, as a kind of offering to the Devil. Others seek to avoid this inner schism by ignoring the darker facts of life which do not fit their faith, as Emerson seemed to do. But what in him was an angelic ignorance of the nether world is in others an easy, evasive optimism, as futile as it is dishonest.

No; either we must accept the universe—all of it—or live a troubled and tormented life where something else divides divinity with God. There is no peace of mind until we take life, with all that it holds of joy or woe, as a discipline meant to harden what is soft within us, and to soften what is hard. It is not easy to do. But life was not meant to be easy; it was meant to be heroic. The metal must be purified and tested, for

> "life is not an idle ore,
> But iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
> And batter'd with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use."

Or, to use the metaphor of William James, life is "a real fight—as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with our idealities and faithfulness, are needed to redeem; and first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears." But those who by faith and fortitude win victory over the atheism of fear do not find the universe either untame or intractable. Gilbert White, watching the Hangar grow green in May and orange in October,

asked the universe one question and waited for the answer—Take away fear, and what remains? The answer is: Peace, even the peace which is also power, in which the soul may grow and unfold like a flower.

Having accepted life as both an adventure and a discipline, how can we win from it a rich, refined, valiant, radiant personality? At least we must do what those men had already done to whom Jesus gave the promise that they should win their souls if they stood steadfast. They had surrendered their hearts to what they had beheld and known of God. They counted not the cost; when they found themselves commanded by the Son of God, they obeyed. They made the decision of discipleship to the Highest, and until we do that wholly, utterly, finally, without reservation or retreat, we can not hope to win the victory most worth the winning. Never did men reap a richer reward. Their very souls seemed to bloom as they walked with him in whose presence sleeping seeds of nobility open and unripe purposes grow golden. They were men like ourselves—average, ordinary men, impulsive, faulty, foolish, slow to grasp great truths, shrinking from hard things—yet they became movers of an inert world. Judged by any test, they must be counted among the greatest men who have toiled in the field of history. Nothing in the life of Jesus is more wonderful than his achievement in the making and mending of men; and what he did in the days of his flesh he has been doing ever since, for those who trust their souls to his keeping and follow in his way.

Therefore, if we really wish to win our souls, we must begin with an act of moral dedication and trust ourselves to every echo of God within us. Unless we are willing, in the very core of our being, to obey what we know is the best, our spirits will be as homeless and restless as the winds. As Royce taught us, life yields its meaning to loyal souls—those who are faithful to great causes and great personalities—they tap the sources of spiritual insight and power. In Jesus the great cause of God in the world becomes a personal friendship. It is so easy to trust him. He is so near to us, so like our best selves, and in loyalty to him we are saved from that self-consciousness which so easily mars even our highest quest. Evermore his words stand true: "Whoso will lose his life for my sake shall find it"—lose it, that is, in the tasks, fidelities and redemptive service to which he gave his life. It may be in great or humble lot. It does not matter; any worthy labor in life is spiritually fruitful if we seek for others what we pray for ourselves. Wilberforce, when asked about his soul, said that he had no time to think about it. Nevertheless, by a Divine indirectness, he won greatness of soul by the abandon with which he gave himself to his high endeavor for the freedom of humanity.

Whether in great causes or in humble tasks, let us not forget that spiritual victory is the trophy of a steadfast patience. Here is really the key-word of the text. Many a man has lost his faith, if not his soul, by a fretful impatience. A bereavement falls

upon him, desolating his days, and in his agony he lets go of God and rails at Fate. If only he had waited, at least a ray of light would have dawned out of the darkness. Alas! in his anger he turned his back upon the undiscovered glories of the spiritual world. By the same token, it required patience for Newman to learn that a thousand intellectual difficulties need not make one spiritual doubt. "Having done all, stand fast," is a note that echoes all through the Epistles of St. Paul, for whom patience was never easy. Not easily did Milton learn in his blindness that "they also serve who only stand and wait." At times that is all we can do, and the discipline of standing like a soldier under fire makes veteran souls. If sympathy is to be the fruit of sorrow, if trust is to be the issue of trouble, we must not only labor, but learn to wait.

> "Of itself will nothing come,
> That we must still be fretting?"

Let patience have her perfect work; patience with God, patience with man, patience with ourselves—so shall we win our souls. For patience is spiritual power, both perceptive and receptive, and by its stern endurance God has trained His greatest helpers.

Tagore has a lovely story called *The Victory,* in which he tells of the poet Shekhar who sang of the old and simple things that lay in the hearts of men and who worshiped the beauty of an unseen

Princess. There was no great variety in his song; his theme was the eternal man and the eternal woman, "the sorrow that comes from the beginning of time, and the joy without end." And the truth of his song was attested in the inmost heart of every man from the beggar to the king on his throne. Then came the great poet Pundarik, who wandered victoriously from court to court challenging simple singers by the splendor of his language and the richness of his fancy. There was a contest, and Pundarik astonished the scholars and the people by his learning, so much so that the king set the garland of victory on his head; and Shekhar crept away defeated to die. As he lay dying there came to him the Princess of his dreams to hail him as victor. He learned from her why the people did not applaud his song. They could not. It seemed a desecration. Their own souls seemed to sing to them in his words. His tones echoed so deep in their hearts, and evoked such haunting memories, that they forgot the poet who had sung. He lost the laurel, but he won his soul—and with it a smile worth all the world.

Each soul hath its song, or sweet or sad, and happy is he who sings in the day what God has taught him in the night—forgetting himself. Whether he mount up like a lark in the sky, or slowly beat his music out in the valley of humility, his song will find response somewhere, if not on earth, then in the heart of God, where every wandering human tone is gathered into one sovereign harmony. Astray in my memory are these lines

from Christina Rossetti, which touch the secret of the discord in our hearts, and in the song God has given us to sing:

> "God harden me against myself,
> This coward with pathetic voice
> Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys.
>
> "Myself, arch-traitor to myself;
> My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
> My clog whatever way I go."

THE ORDEAL OF PEACE

PRAYER

Eternal Father, on a day of holy and high remembrance we worship and bow down in humble awe and longing. How strange, how terrible, are Thy ways upon the earth, as Thy mighty will fulfills itself amid the tumult of humanity. Through a dark time of strife and confusion Thou hast led us to this day. Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory; be it ours to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before Thee. The Lord of hosts is with us yet, the God of righteousness is our refuge.

Reverently we remember the heroism of men and the fortitude of women in a time of terror and trial—those who endured with valor, those who suffered with patience, and those who gave all, even the sweet blood of youth, for a better day. Mercy of God, let us not by carelessness or indifference be guilty of the worst of all sacrileges—the waste of sacrifice. Move upon our minds, and the minds of men everywhere, that a nobler spirit and a wiser vision may rule our thoughts and ways.

Eternal Justice, make us just in mind and spirit, that the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdom of justice. We pray not for the peace of ease, but for the peace of righteousness and goodwill, and the moral love that fulfills itself in fellowship. Comfort Thou Thy people; guide our groping humanity out of chaos into brotherhood. Enlighten our darkness; let ignorance, oppression and envy cease, and heaven and earth be linked in every soul. In the name of Him who is the Prince of Peace, Amen.

THE ORDEAL OF PEACE

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Matt. 5:9.

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." Isaiah 32:17.

IT is an Armistice that we celebrate, not Peace; and the Day brings back a medley of memories, exaltations, regrets and dismays. For some of us it makes vivid scenes which we pray God to be able to forget—scenes so horrible that they make the blood run cold. Relief unspeakable was blended on that day with disillusionment and spiritual fatigue; and instead of the new world of which we had dreamed, we saw a world embittered and confused, if not cracked to its very foundations. Humanity had suffered so much, hoped so much, dreamed so much, expecting a new age and a better world—and the result is no adequate reward.

Howbeit, our first thoughts should be of the gay and gallant lads who fought the war, revealing an incredible heroism—hurling their warm bodies against the cold machines. They did not falter or fail. They fought a great war and we made a little peace, and to-day there is no assurance that another horror will not befall our children; because we have not followed righteousness. One recalls the words

of Pericles in praise of the heroic dead of olden time, and one wishes that such words might be made a part of a ritual of holy and high remembrance, in the hope that it might touch the reverent imagination of mankind and lend a sacramental significance to a day forever memorable in our annals.

> Each one, man by man, has won imperishable praise, each has gained a glorious grave—not that sepulcher of earth wherein they lie, but the living tomb of everlasting remembrance wherein their glory is enshrined; remembrance that will live on the lips, that will bloom in the deeds, of their countrymen the world over.
>
> For the whole earth is the sepulcher of heroes; monuments may rise and tablets be set up to them in their own land, but on far-off shores there is an abiding memorial that no pen or chisel has traced: it is graven not on stone or brass but on the living heart of humanity.
>
> Take these men, then, for your examples. Like them remember that prosperity can only be for the free, that freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it.

These simple and stately sentences, by reason of their dignity and simplicity, utter in an adequate manner what our faltering words try to say, adding beauty to memory and reverence to responsibility. They recall that prayer, older than our era, which beseeches heaven for a better mind and a nobler mood upon earth: "From the murmur and subtlety of suspicion with which we vex one another, give us rest. Make a new beginning, and mingle again the kindred of the nations in an alchemy of love, and

with some finer essence of forbearance and of forgiveness temper our minds."

It is now well-nigh twenty-seven hundred years since the prophets of old foresaw, from the heights of Hebrew vision, the end of war. Seers do not set dates, but they do forefeel and interpret the moral order of the world and the will of God. Almost as long ago Plato reasoned of a time when the rule of Force would give way to the reign of Reason. Faint and far off such visions must have seemed in those far-away centuries; but it meant much that men dreamed such dreams. Wars many, wars horrible, have come and gone since Isaiah preached in Jerusalem and Plato lectured in Athens; but that vision grows and abides—proving its immortality in its last crucifixion and resurrection.

Some of us find ourselves asking this fundamental question in the secret places of our hearts: Are such visions idle dreams, or Divine inspirations? They must be one or the other, and it makes all the difference which they are as to how we labor for the good of humanity, and what hope we have of its future. If such visions are only fancies born of the ferment of the human mind, and revived by our present distress, let us face the fact, though it open before us a vista of endless and increasing strife, each war more frightful than the last, with interludes of bicker, bargain, and the balancing of powers. If war is an essential part of the scraggly chaos we call civilization—if there is something inherent in nationality that makes it necessary—then let us have

the blunt and brutal honesty of Ludendorf and admit that our religion is a thing too fair ever to have been true in the past, and too frail ever to come true in the future. For, if war is an eternal human fact, then Christianity is as vain as all the vain things proclaimed of Solomon, and had better be given up.

But if there is a God above man, a God who dwells in man, and if humanity exists for other ends than trade, tariff and strife, we must reorder our thinking and living to fit that faith. According to our faith in this ultimate reality of God or no God, according to our choice—each in his own heart—between spirituality and materialism, so it will be unto us, whether war is to be eternal or reason shall rule in human affairs. The mighty prophets, at least, did not believe they were following a forlorn hope, duped by elusive phantoms and vague impossibilities. Nor did that glorious succession of apostolic federalists and peace-thinkers who succeeded to their vision, from Dante to Grotius, from William Penn to Victor Hugo, to name no others, whose names shine like stars in the crown of humanity.

No. Those who walked with God saw afar the triumph alike of reason and righteousness, as Tennyson, in our own day, foresaw "airy navies grappling in the central blue"—as I have seen them many a time in Flanders and over the helpless cities of England—and beyond that "the parliament of man and the federation of the world." They refused to admit that the past is a measure of the future, holding

that man exists to surpass himself; and that God, who has put such dreams in our hearts, is Himself working in us and through us to fulfill in our human world His creative purpose of good will. They knew that there are reserves of Divine help on which man has not yet drawn, and springs of power in human nature yet to be tapped, and they trusted the increasing purpose running through the ages. It is faith, and yet again faith, on which the whole matter turns, faith in God, faith in humanity, faith in moral forces, faith in the power of spirit to rule flesh, faith in light to dispel darkness, in sympathy to overcome suspicion, in the future to set us free from the blood-rusted fetters of the past.

There is no need to recall the history of the last five years, a time in which reaction ran rife, when such idealism as stood the strain of the war became as dim as a taper in a London fog. The solidarity of the world dissolved in a welter of swinish selfishness, to an accompaniment of jazz, until one felt at times that man had learned nothing from the war but a new brutality in the old game of grab—so much land for so many dead—until one feared that the dead would rise up and smite us with a divine rebuke. All the anger, hate, and bitterness burning in the public mind found focus in the Paris Conference, making a state of mind in which justice and good-will could not live. No wonder a British officer, writing to me from Paris, closed with the lines:

The devil's kingdom is come,
Ill is the news I tell,
The devil's will is done
On earth as it is in hell.

Working in such an atmosphere, the result of the Conference was a monstrosity—a League of idealism and a Treaty of materialism, each making the other null. All of us can testify to the mood, first of bereavement, then of helplessness, and finally of apathy and indifference, which settled down upon us. Men began talking of the inevitability of "the next war" as glibly as they forgot the horrors of the last, at the behest of a vague, pervasive fatalism, as paralyzing as it is pernicious, as if the earth were to be a perpetual jungle of jealous states snarling and snapping at each other, and ever so often plunging into war. The Washington Conference gave us a ray of hope, albeit only a faint glimmer. Happily a better day is slowly dawning, a better mood is making itself felt, and, let us hope, a better mind. The sky is less cloudy; party rancor and personal revenge are not so intense; and the whisper of grief has fallen from a sob to a sigh which follows the evening sun around the world.

Some things are clear, and one is that we have seen what war is when stripped of fine phrases and that "dream the drummers make" when they go marching by. *War is just the killing of boys, and nobody can make anything else out of it.* At least we have been shown, in a red and ghastly vision, the

utter futility and insanity of war. Often a shudder is more potent than an argument, and this generation has seen the earth a flaming hell and the sea made a cemetery. Ten million boys dead—no blurred cynicism, no diplomatic rhetoric, can hide that terrible and terrifying fact! Ten million boys—fathers of dream-children never now to be born—such a fact makes even Christmas pensive! If by some art, some power of insight and imagination, like the writer of the Apocalypse, we could see "the dead, small and great, standing before God," or passing in procession before the mind of humanity, surely the hesitations of diplomacy and the fanaticisms of nationality would be forgotten.

Facts are the presence of God—physical facts, economic facts, no less than moral facts. If God speaks to man in facts, events and the outworking of ideas, He could not speak more plainly if He wrote His words in the sky. Truly, if man will not now see, hear and heed, after the loss of ten million men and two hundred billion dollars, neither will he be persuaded though all the dead arise and confront him. Thus, as is always true in the long last, by a Divine pragmatism, the financial facts confirm the moral demands. After all, it may be the mission of economic determinism to teach righteousness, as it is the function of religion to reveal meanings and values. At any rate, we have had an august demonstration, in facts and figures, of the stupidity of war. Even the "practical" man, always the last to learn, begins to have misgivings as to the validity of the

"common sense" by which he sets so much store. At last, by an uncommon sense, man may attain even to common sense—or perish.

What can we do? First of all, the growing moral judgment of the race can, and will, declare war to be a sin in religion and a crime in the public law of the world. It did not require any sudden or radical revolution in human nature to repudiate dueling and slavery. Nor need we wait until all the race is converted to Christ in order to discard the whole idea and system of war. If any one seeks what my old teacher called "the moral equivalent of war," he can find it in fighting war itself, and he will discover that such a crusade is sufficiently dramatic. Second, we can stop the private manufacture of arms and ammunition for purposes of war. If this is done, as it can and must be, it will surprise us how quickly many amiable men will lose their faith in war as a permanent factor in civilization. Also, much of the poisonous propaganda—the most terrible weapon of the modern world—will be hushed, as it will no longer be profitable for "the few whose impious weal depends on the public woe" to fan the fires of hate and play upon the fears of men.

Further, it is the manifest will of God, if it is possible for man to read the Eternal Will in the facts and events of history—as the seers of old read the revelation of God in the tumults of their times—that humanity shall have some kind of world organization and understanding, by whatever name

it may be called. Distance is annihilated; the ends of the earth are tied together; it will soon be possible to speak to the whole world by radio. The interweaving and intercommunication of humanity is a fact. Drawn together, driven together, we must organize to live together, whether we like it or not. The earth has become a neighborhood, and it must learn neighborliness. It is not impossible; it is inevitable. Not even America can forever resist the manifest destiny of humanity. The idea that war can end war is an absurdity on the face of it. As well try to put out fire with fire. Only by conference, by coöperation, by submitting differences to a High Court of the World, can they be settled in a civilized manner.

If worst comes to worst—as it may any day, for we live on the edge of a human volcano—we dare not sit by and see our civilization go down in blood and ashes. There is a way out. The great English-speaking race, the British Commonwealth and the American Republic, must join hands and save what is left of the civilization built up since the fall of the Roman Empire. Thank God we have one family of nations that love liberty and respect law, and they have kept the peace between themselves for more than a hundred years—having sense enough to submit their disputes to arbitration and honor enough to abide by the decisions. If they stand together, they can hold the world together. By virtue of their power, their common ideal of civilization, and their practice of liberty under law, an inescap-

able responsibility is laid upon them to preserve the peace of the world.

How can these things be done? It is not enough that a few high-minded men of state should assemble and plan for the peace and order of the race. That is necessary; but their plans and programs will ultimately depend for their realization upon a finer moral and spiritual life rising out of the heart of the people. It is impossible to over-estimate the spiritual factor; without it we lose our way in a bottomless bog. There must be a power of faith, a will to fellowship, a creative audacity of adventure, a "league of friendly minds," and only the very genius of the religious spirit can achieve such a result. Not religion as an abstraction, still less as a huddle of sects, but religion as a great law and principle of being, can save us from cynicism and savagery. As for the Church, if it can not keep peace within its own fellowship, it can do little in behalf of the peace of mankind. No, there must be a new dimension of religion—more real, more drastic, more heroic, more human and practical in its insight and appeal, more divine in its consecrating compassion.

Above all, by the grace of God, we must shake off the mood of apathy and cynical dismay, born of the despair in which we have been living, and make the public law and peace of the world our personal concern. Things do not happen; they are brought about, and each of us can help to the measure of his influence and power. A Peace Society was formed after the Napoleonic Wars, but it

soon became a bit of a joke. Men came into power who had not lived through the horror and misery of those years. Old greeds, old envies, old vanities, old demands for territory, became active—and again there was war. The same thing will happen again —is happening before our eyes—unless we exert ourselves to prevent it, using every agency at our command to bring an intelligent, vigilant, articulate public opinion to the service of sanity, good-will, and the most effective practical proposals.

When I am tempted to be cynical—as I have been many times in the last five years—I take down a book from a tiny library which I brought back with me from England. It is made up of the poems, essays, stories and letters of the men in the trenches, and the brief, blotted memoirs of those who fell. The letters of Harold Chapin to his little boys, the essays of Donald Hankey—whom I knew and loved in 1916, before he was killed in October of that year—the poems of Seeger, Brooke, Sorley, Kettle, and Kilmer—to call their names is like reading a rosary of genius—these and others died fighting and singing. But, dying, they left one shining phrase, "Carry on," and the last word of the dead must be the first command to the living. They were not cynics. They did not fear or falter or fail—how can we bow to the foul mud gods of greed or hate in the presence of such a cloud of witnesses!

Blessed are the peacemakers, not merely the peace-talkers, but those who with heart and hand toil wisely and without anger—unhasting, unresting

—to create and spread the spirit of fraternal righteousness and a prophetic good-will. Fear has done its worst. Statesmanship has done its best. Force has failed. Spiritual influences must now take up the task, softening the bitterness of man and weaving a better spell upon the human mind. Only love remains, and love "never faileth," if we have the daring to try it. Man has a genius for trying all the wrong ways before he attempts the right way. The morning of the race is young—man is only a step or two on his way to the City of God.

Soon rested those who fought; but thou,
  Who minglest in the harder strife
For truths which men receive not now,
  Thy warfare only ends with life.

THE SOUL AND THE CROWD

PRAYER

Eternal Father God, something deep and haunting in our hearts draws us to this altar of beauty, seeking in fellowship what none may find alone. Lift us out of any dull, cold, peevish or rebellious temper of mind, lest we be too gloomy to hope and too willful to learn. Melt our hardness, surprise our aloofness; open within us a fountain of prayer and praise—make us eager, tender, responsive.

Lord, if we have attained to any bit of fine behavior, if we have been held by the clutch of duty in a hard place, or helped any one along a rough road, we praise Thee and give thanks. If we have failed of what we knew was good and brave and kind, if we have turned aside from a hard task, or left some one to fall under a load we might have lifted, forgive us, Lord, though we may not forgive ourselves.

Thou knowest our lives are low-vaulted and troubled, only a muddled memory of what they ought to be. Live in us more richly; make our faith a uniting assent to Thy holy will, our experience a revelation, our service a sacrament. In faithfulness may our faith be fulfilled, and Thy reality unveiled in lives of purity, pity, and the joy of doing good. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THE SOUL AND THE CROWD

"Jesus said, Who touched me? Peter said, Master, the multitude throng Thee, and Thou sayest Who touched me?" Luke 8:45.

TAKE any page in the Life of Jesus, and one has always the feeling that it might have been written yesterday, or this morning. He was so in touch with life, and so in tune with the Infinite, that we can hardly think that he moved to and fro in a day far gone. Nor is the reason far to seek. Outward changes have been many, but in its essential realities life remains to-day what it was then, and what it will be ages hence. Because Jesus lived the Eternal Life in time, he is a citizen of every age and every land—just as when a poet, like Homer or Burns, sings of love or death and the wayside flower, his song is immortal and never goes out of date. No other life has the same quality in anything like the same degree. That is why when we read the story of his days, he seems to draw near and walk with us along the way—every act a parable, every scene a symbol.

What a parable of the life of our day is that scene of the multitude thronging Jesus, pressing upon him, crowding him—yet not touching him! So near, yet so far! *Crowds* is the title of the book in which Stanley Lee describes so brilliantly the clutter

of modern life, its clatter and its confusion. Never were human beings so jostled and jammed as they are to-day; never was life so teeming and turbulent. Our great cities, like New York and London, are human oceans in which the individual is no more than a tiny, lonely wave on a remote sea. Humanity moves in multitudes. Men think in mass. Often they huddle together in a way to suggest weakness rather than strength, ruled by the tyranny of the Many yielding to the pressure of Numbers, mistaking massed ignorance for wisdom. No wonder meditation is a lost art, since there is so little time to practice it, thronged as we are by a thousand things. Even our religious life is influenced by the crowd-spirit, and if a census is not more eloquent than a sermon, it sometimes seems to be.

Years ago the author of *Christus Futurus* told us how a man has not the same mind when with one neighbor as when with another. When he is with both his mind undergoes still another modification. When he lives in a village his mind is modified by the pull of the common mind of that village. When he goes up to the town the larger environment affects him visibly, if not consciously; and again and more so in a city. Such is the psychology of the crowd, so much studied in our day, whereby a man in a mass is other than himself, either for good or bad. Few can resist the contagion of a crowd. Either we are exalted or degraded, owing to the crowd we are in, which may be a congregation at prayer or a mob in riot. At any rate, we do and

think things we should hardly think or do alone. However mixed its motives may be, gaping curiosity walking side by side with yearning need, it means much to be in a crowd that is following Jesus. At least, we are going in the right direction, and, swept along by the bustle and presence of the crowd, we may be carried further than we otherwise would go. But crowd religion is not enough, as we learn sooner or later, in time of trial and tragedy, if in no other way.

Here again the parable fits the need and situation of our time. Nearly all of us grew up in the atmosphere of Christian ideas and accept, in some degree, the facts about Jesus, and the teaching of His words. That is to say, we are in the crowd that is following Him in a general way. Most of us, however, are like the man in the Wells story—*Mr. Britling Sees It Through*—to whom God was a thing of intelligence, a theory, a report, something told about but not realized. His thinking about God was like some one who had found an empty house, very beautiful and pleasant, and full of the promise of a fine personality. He had wandered through the house, making many curious explorations, but had never met the Master of it. Then came war, with its measureless woe and bitter tragedy. Amidst the darkness and confusions, the nightmare stupidities and the hideous cruelties of it all, he heard, downstairs, dear and friendly, the voice of the Master coming in. Of course, the man in the story is Wells himself, whose mind is like a crowded city, and who

has since pressed through the throng of his thoughts and found God!

Of all those that followed Jesus that day, only one sick woman pushed her way through the crowd and touched him. Nor did she do it because of the crowd, but in spite of it. For years, St. Mark tells us, she had "suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." St. Luke, himself a physician, spares his profession this severe satire but he admits the fact. She heard of Jesus and "kept saying over and over to herself"—such is the force of the imperfect tense of the verb—"if I but touch His garments, I shall be made whole." Such a story represents a vast chapter in the book of human life. How many there are who languish in weakness, pursued by pain, hoping against hope, as year drags after year! If all such were gathered together at one pool of Bethesda, what a scene it would be to stir the heart and break it. Yet illness need not be an unmixed evil, unless we make it so. It makes us think of many things we often forget. Day by day the perspective changes and we learn to estimate all the world offers at its proper value. Happy we are if it leads us through the crowd to the Healer of our souls!

In an old bookshop in London I found two tiny books side by side. One was entitled *What Will You Make of Sickness,* edited by the late Thomas Higginson from the discourses of Epictetus. It was like a tonic to read it, bringing back that brave spirit

of the olden time who made so fine a fight for spiritual liberty in the midst of physical infirmity and social slavery. It was the high, stern Stoic spirit in it, holding that nothing is either good or evil save in the will, and that we have in us the power to transmute our ills and make them servants of the soul. The other little book was called *Health and Holiness,* by Francis Thompson and its sub-title tells us that it is "a study of the relations between Brother Ass, the Body, and the Rider, the Soul." Among other things it points out that men were more robust in the olden times than they are now, more stolid, less sensitive. Asceticism, he insists, was needed to tone the body down in those days, whereas with us the body needs to be reënforced and toned up to meet the demands of life. He might have added that the unsettlement of faith in our time has wrought havoc in human hearts and nerves. However that may be, there has come upon us a whole swarm of nervous ills of all sorts, unknown to our fathers, and we are sorely plagued.

Along with this scourge, in answer to a deep need, there has come a new health mysticism, of which we need to take account. James analyzed this movement years ago, pointing out the elements entering into it, describing it as a product of America. It takes many shapes, but at bottom it is an effort to realize religion and apply it to both body and mind. Crude it may often be in its thought—lacking, as some one has said, the strength of true simplicity and the wealth of true profundity—but it is a force

to be reckoned with none the less. Nothing is easier than to indicate its limitations—its tendency to make health an end instead of a means, its evasive optimism, its lack of liberating self-forgetfulness and sweet humility. But that is not the whole of the matter. They are blind who do not see in it a human need reaching out after spiritual laws and divine forces, seeking to put them to the uses of life. The result is a recovery, in some sort, of a truth known to the early church, and which the church to-day is guilty of unfaith, as of folly, in losing. Instead of being angry at its own failure, the church ought to be glad that so many have been blessed, and ask why it is so.

Many of our ills—many more than we think—as we now know, have their roots less in physical disorder than in spiritual discord, and when that discord is removed, the body becomes normal. An old, old truth, to be sure, but a great truth, all the same, and one that we had lost sight of along with much else. Through it thousands in our day have found their way to fellowship with the Love that will not let us go, rejoicing in deliverance from haunting fears and false sorrows which made life one long misery. Gentleness and kindness have taken the place of dread and discontent, and they see life as a sunny upland where once it was a valley of shadows, drab, drear and desolate. Dear John Woolman, as we learn from his *Journal,* was one day taken ill, and he began at once to inquire as to its spiritual cause. Finding the cause, as he thought, in con-

formity to certain customs which he believed were not right, he set down in his quiet and gentle way how he met his affliction:

"Feeling the desire of further purifying, there was now no desire in me for health until the design of my correction was answered. Thus I lay in abasement and brokenness of spirit, and as I felt a sinking down into a calm resignation, so I felt as in an instant, an inward healing of my nature, and from that time forward I grew better."

Woolman sought health of soul first, and to attain it he was willing to endure pain, if need be, for his further purifying. Others, not so used to the ways of the spirit, are now groping after spiritual laws in the midst of physical weakness. Many a man, like Francis of Assisi, seems unaware that he has a soul until an illness lays him low and makes the fact known. Only the other day a lady came to tell me how her faith was unreal, and the words of Jesus seemed like whiffs of perfume that float on summer winds, until she lay at the gates of death. Given up to die, she learned that those words are in fact the very laws of life, and laying hold of them as such she was lifted out of the shadow. Like the woman of old, she pushed through the throng of shadows and touched the hem of His robe and was healed. To-day her faith is not a tradition, not a theory, not a report, but a fact of which she has proof in health of body and joy of spirit.

But if health of soul should be our first concern, and is always attainable, it is not so of physical

health. Not a few of the noblest and sweetest souls have become such because in the exigencies of pain and trouble they have been driven back to the soul within the soul, and there have found the secret of strength and peace. Some of the saints came to their heritage of spiritual power, being made perfect through suffering. In weakness they were made strong, in sorrow they were sanctified. St. Paul prayed earnestly that his thorn in the flesh might be removed, but it was not to be so. In spite of it, perhaps because of it, he became the mighty and tender spirit that he was, rich in sympathy, radiant in power. Stevenson lived with death at his elbow, in the faith that "the truest health is to be able to do without it." Such bodily ills as cannot be healed can be overcome by a high and daring faith which lays hold of the love of God, realizes it, and rests in it.

There is in each of us, did we but know how to make use of it, what Ruskin called a "touch faculty," by which we may have access to vast, unguessed powers that are always and everywhere near us. Some have no doubt read that story called *The Saint*, by Forgazzaro, in which the whole of modern Italy is spread before us in a picture. It is a new version of the life of Francis of Assisi, written with rare insight and art, bringing back the glow and wonder of days of old. Many gather about the Saint and are healed, the while he speaks very plainly of their sordid selfishness in seeking ease of body and remaining sick or unclean of soul. Modestly he disclaims all power, all magic, save such as every man has in

his own soul if he will only make use of it—the power of faith by which we may touch the hem of a flowing garment vast and white, and find purity and health of spirit.

"You exalt me because you are blind. If this girl is healed, not I have healed her, but her faith has made her whole. This power of faith is in God's world, everywhere and always, like the power of terror, which causes us to tremble and fall down. It is a power in the soul, like the powers which are in water, and in fire. Therefore, if the girl is healed, it is because God has put this great power into His world; praise Him for it, not me. And now, listen! You offend God by believing His strength and bounty to be greater in miracles. His strength and bounty are everywhere, and always infinite. It is difficult to understand how faith can heal, but it is impossible to understand how these flowers grow. It is well to pray for health, but pray still more fervently to be able to adore the will of God, when it gives you death, as when it gives you life."

There speaks a sweet voice telling us the old truth taught by Jesus on the hills of Galilee. The church has all the sources of infinite power, without a mutilated gospel, if it will but realize and make use of what it has. No man need give up the gospel in order to be healed; he need only to practice it. Still, as of old, the Teacher, the Healer, moves to and fro in the midst of our crowded modern life, seeking to save us from ourselves and from the troops of ills that beset us. He is no dead fact lost in the mist of

time, but a living presence to be known and loved as truly as in the days of his flesh, if, like the woman in her need, we make our way to him through the throng and touch his seamless robe. Legend tells that her name was Veronica, and that she lived at Cæsarea Philippi. Eusebius says that he himself had seen at the gate of her reputed residence in that city a group of statuary, representing her kneeling at the feet of Jesus, who was stretching out His hand toward her.

Also, there is a lovely tradition that when Jesus was on his way to the hill outside the city gate, fainting under the burden of his cross, that it was Veronica who pressed through the crowd, as she had done on a day long gone, and gave him a handkerchief to wipe his brow—ministering to him in his tragedy with tender, womanly touch, as he had ministered to her of his grace and power.

THE LOAF AND THE CUP

PRAYER

Holy and Merciful Father, Thy glory makes the earth a Temple and all life a Sacrament; in the House of Thy Presence we lift up our hearts in worship. Thou whose love is our hope, reveal Thyself to us in this hour of fellowship; help us to reject the testimony of the world and reaffirm our faith in Thee. Lead us beyond the outward symbol into the inner secret of grace and truth, making our home in that which no vicissitude can obscure.

Eternal Spirit, we praise Thee for the company of those gone before; may we not be careless of the inheritance of inspiration they have left us. We give thanks for the fellowship of the living, with whom we share Thy mercies and adore Thy name—our comrades and fellow-workers. Make us of one heart with all who seek Thee, of one communion with all who love Thee, of one purpose with all who serve Thy holy will in faithfulness and joy.

Bless the lonely of soul with Thy fellowship, and the wounded of heart with Thy healing. Give to the hungry of spirit Thyself, his bread of life, even the hidden manna whereof if he eat he shall hunger no more. O Thou who hearest what our words cannot tell, touch our spirits by Thy spirit to a loftier melody, that our song on earth may blend, for a brief time, with the eternal song of the redeemed. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THE LOAF AND THE CUP

"This is my body; this is my blood." Luke 22: 19-20.

ACROSS the ages we gather once more with Jesus and his friends in the Upper Room on the evening of farewell. It was an hour of parting, in which there is always something of the Infinite, but it had in it the promise of reunion. An ineffable moment, only a symbol, by which men utter what words can never express, could tell its deep meanings. Carlyle saw the majesty of that scene, and amid his burning pictures of the French Revolution he paused to note how pale is the pomp of kings beside that peasant group at their frugal supper, with no symbol but hearts God-initiated into the Divine depths of sorrow, and a "This do in remembrance of me." Here simplicity is sublimity, and the Loaf and the Cup become emblems of unutterable things.

Having eaten the bitter herbs of the Passover and tasted the Cup of Blessing, by an artless act Jesus turned a festival of historic memory into a feast of faith and prophecy—linking the tradition of his fathers with a clearer, holier vision of the Father of all. Only a symbol could thus show the passing from the awful, cloud-robed Jehovah of old into

the nearer presence of One who sits at our table, a Companion of our hearts, blessing our daily bread and drink. We of the West do not—perhaps can not—know the full meaning of that simple symbol as the men of the East knew it. When the Teacher said, "This is my body, this is my blood," such symbolism was in accord with all their traditions, habits of thought, and ways of speech. With this scene we ought always to join that sunset scene at Emmaus when, in the gloaming of the day, the risen Lord kept tryst with his friends by the breaking of bread, turning their grief into gladness and gratitude.

From the earliest day Christianity has united two elements, the historical and the mystical, and its story has been one of alternating emphasis upon the two. Before Calvary we have a ministry of outward contact; afterwards a ministry of inward presence. This dual nature of our religion has involved belief in certain facts about the life and work of Jesus, and at the same time it has meant an inward experience of union with God through him. One has only to read the first three Gospels, and then turn to the Epistles of St. Paul, to see these two aspects most vividly, by virtue of contrast and emphasis. The Gospels tell the story of Jesus in the days of his flesh; but St. Paul did not know Jesus after the flesh, and his interest lay in the inward or spiritual life of Jesus. In the Gospel of St. John, to which we should add his Epistles, these two elements, the historical and the inward, are united; and that is why he is so beloved and so fruitful as a teacher of faith.

I

The great Christian symbol is only a piece of bread. No crown, no glory of jewels, no sword of power; nothing occult, imperial, or hierophantic; nothing rare, or precious, or imperishable—just a piece of bread that must be renewed from day to day. Only a loaf of bread, grown in any field, ground in any mill, baked in any oven, eaten in any cottage or palace by men and women and little children in any land. It is incredible, yet it continues to be true—such is the simplicity and catholicity of the Gospel of Christ. It is as if he had walked through the strange heart of man, looking into its corners and chambers, until he came to that innermost sanctuary and there found an ancient hunger of humanity, the earnest of that in us which can not perish. Evermore, in the unfathomable human heart, even when it has been defiled, the cry for the Bread of God is unquenchable.

With unerring insight Jesus knew that back of all the feverish activity of humanity, its eager aspiration and its struggling achievement, its hope and its fear, there is a great hunger urging it on. How deep that hunger is, and how insistent, no one needs to be told who knows his own heart. It is felt in the oldest poetry and the newest fiction, as witness a very remarkable, if rather grim, story, entitled *Secret Bread,* by Tennyson Jesse. Two strains run through the story: the majestic march of the passing generations and the profound hunger of the human

heart. Parson Boase is a kind of chorus of the earlier part of the book, as he is the benediction of the last part, and he it is who looks into our hearts when he says, in talking with a young man: "There is only one thing certain—that we all have something, some secret bread of our own soul, by which we live, that nourishes and sustains us. It may be a different thing for each man alive."

Aye, it may be a different thing in different times of life, as is shown in the life of Ishmael Raun, who enters the story a youth and goes out of it a grandfather. Youth lives on courage and hope, not on what happens but on what may happen. Every morning when it wakes up it feels that to-day the great thing may happen, though it has the vaguest idea of what the great thing may be. And old people—what do they live by? Ah, that is what every one must find out for himself. It depends on what middle age has laid up in store, and that is nearly always something more material than what fed his youth. No one must despise the secret bread by which another lives. For Ishmael Raun it was his home and land, and to his old age and death we see him growing into the pattern of life as seed-time and harvest expound it. For Parson Boase it is something deeper and more satisfying:

"That feeds my soul from which my soul came, and daily the vision draws nearer to me and its reflection here strengthens even my earthly eyes. This world is dear and sweet, but only because I know that it is not all, or even the most important part. Each

day is the sweeter to me because each day I can say, 'Come quickly, O Lord Jesus.' "

Alas, what poor fare the human multitude feeds on, compared with what is provided for all and free to all. This fact amazed Isaiah, as it has so many others: "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently to me, and eat that which is good." Yet to-day, as of old, we turn away from the bread that cometh down from heaven; we try to sustain our souls on dainty hopes and theories, forgetting the prayer of the Psalmist: "Let me not eat of their dainties." Like the Prodigal, we leave the house of the Father, where there is bread enough and to spare, and feed on husks that leave us hungry. From refusing the hidden manna of the soul all the inconstancies of life follow, its restlessness, its weakness, its weariness. What do you live on? What crumb of comfort, what crust of faith, keeps your soul alive? What secret bread gives you strength for to-day and hope for to-morrow? Have you found the Bread that satisfies?

One of the loveliest scenes in the life of Francis of Assisi was his visit to the Lord Bishop of Ostia. Sitting next to his host at a sumptuous table, amidst knights and nobles, clad in his rough garb, bound by a girdle, he took out his wallet of alms and began to eat. What a picture for an artist to paint: the Poor Little Man eating his secret bread which he had begged, while the Bishop and his guests dined so richly! It was the Bread of God, he said, given him

by the peasants to whom he preached the gospel of love and comradeship. Having partaken himself, with the gayety and courtesy which marked his life he gave a morsel to each of the knightly guests, excusing himself by saying, "I hold this as toward God the highest nobility and royal dignity, in honor of him who being Lord of all was willing for our sakes to become the servant of all." No wonder Renan said that Francis made it easy to believe in Jesus—his life at once a poem and a parable.

The incident easily lends itself to allegory, by which we are taught how, even at the gayest table, no soul can go without its secret bread. Such men have bread to eat we know not of, sustaining their heroic and dedicated lives. Hezekiah put it into words of beauty when, after the merciful lengthening of his life, he prayed: "O Lord, by these things man lives, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." What things? The days added to his life may have meant little; its deepening everything. He had become such a ruler as the prophet Micah sings of in a lyric: "He shall feed on the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God." The prophet adds tersely, sufficingly, "And he shall abide." No earthly honors, no gauds of the world, can tempt him from the table of the hidden manna. Such men are the strength and solace of mankind; they can endure the woes of to-day because they are sure of the morrows. Aye, they are bread and wine to their fellows:

I have been broken; and I hunger, burning
  To feed the hearts for whom I am made bread;
I have been poured out; and I thirst, in yearning
  For those to drink for whom the wine is red.

Take me, O world of sisters and of brothers,
  Eat, drink of my life's show-ripened utterings;
Give me the heaven of being a loaf to others,
  A pitcher of the everlasting things.

II

Likewise he took the Cup, emblem of his own blood, the red wine of life poured out in sacrifice. "When he had given thanks, he gave it to them: *and they all drank it*"—symbolizing the fellowship of his suffering. Jesus often spoke of his Cup, always implying its tremendous contents, so difficult to drink. He refused the stupefying potion offered him when he hung on the Cross. As Browning said, he would not let Death bandage his eyes and bid him creep past the post of his foe. Rather, he drank his Cup to the dregs, facing, open-eyed, the raw horror of evil and the wild passions of the world. Clearly it was in some other than a physical quality that his Cup was so terrible—a fact which makes our hearts stand still, wondering at the spiritual necessity which required it.

Yet he gave the Cup to his disciples, and they drank of it, meaning that we, too, must have a part in that ultimate experience of which the ritual

drinking is symbolic. Can it be so? Is this what St. Paul meant when he spoke of "the fellowship of his suffering," in which his followers are called to have a share? May we dare to interpret our suffering for our sins, or for the sins of others, as a part of that sublime sacrament of sacrifice of which the Cross is the focus? If so, surely there is a light in our darkest hour, and we begin to divine a meaning even in our sorrow. Some such insight led Maurice to confess the sins of his age as his own, making himself a partaker in the tragedy of his time, bearing on his heart the marks of the Lord Jesus—a Social Gospel fathoms deeper than what usually passes under that name, and far more challenging to Christian faith.

Since the time of Aquinas the sacrament of the Loaf and the Cup has had a threefold meaning. First, it is a feast of Memory; it takes us back across the years to the Upper Room—unites us by an unbroken tie with those in all ages who have loved Jesus and sought to live in his spirit, evoking a sense of historic fellowship. Second, it is a festival of the Living Christ as he promised to be with those who meet in his name, remembering his cross. The dogma of the Real Presence may have been crude, but the truth it is trying to tell us is what we most need to sanctify us and woo our loneliness into the liberty of the larger fellowship, if we would truly live. Third, it is a prophecy, so beautiful, so moving, yet so little understood: "I will not drink hence-

forth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Surely this is the crowning truth of which the Holy Supper is a foreshadowing. It proclaims the enduring worth and meaning of our social fellowships, the sanctity that hallows the home, the eternal quality of the dear love of man for his friend. Nay, more; it prophesies the final, glad reunion when the broken ties of earth shall be rewoven in an Eternal Communion, and the deep hurt and heartache shall be healed. Let us so observe it, remembering not only the historic past, but also the prophetic future. Long ago an old Gaelic minister at a communion service let fall a sentence no one can forget: "The Church is the Lord's Supper to the world." Having this ministry, and this hope, let us purify ourselves, the better to reveal the Living Christ as a Real Presence among men.

What, then, did Jesus mean when he called himself the Bread and Wine of Life, whereof if we eat and drink we shall hunger and thirst no more? He meant that his life, his gospel, is not a mere luxury of humanity, but a necessity, like the bread we eat; that his redemption is not simply wrought out for us in his sacrifice, but must be wrought in us. Mysticism is realized religion: it is taking the life and truth of Jesus into our very being, like the bread we eat and the wine we drink, until it becomes a part of us. Nothing else or less can satisfy us, much less save us from ourselves and from the dark forces

that stand against us. Until the truth as it is in Jesus, his vision of life, his faith in God, is taken into our very being—aye, transubstantiated into the essence of character—it can not do for us what it was meant to do. No one realized this more truly than St. Paul, and his words about it, glorified by a glowing mysticism, shine like stars to light our way.

Truth feeds the mind, and nothing else can satisfy it; mere facts are not enough. The hungry human intellect tramps the earth and sky in search of the truth of things, going from star to atom. It discovers much, but it does not find the one truth most needful until it learns the truth as it is in Jesus. Love is the sweet food of the heart. Human love means much—oh! so much—when it is deep and pure and true, and the hunger for it is pathetic. A Russian story tells of a poor man and wife as they go to and fro in their hard labor. Their words are few, but now and again there is a silent embrace, and we know what keeps their souls alive. If human love means so much, how much more the vision of the love of God in Christ! By such things is the life of the human spirit as it takes its way through the years.

Truth, love, righteousness—truly here is living bread, and because men find it in Christ as in no other he has been, is now, and ever shall be the succor of those who struggle and aspire. But here our words come to an end. What lies beyond can only be set forth in a symbol, a sacrament, an ineffable fellowship; and of that one may not speak. By

such things we have hope of that day, foretold of old, "when they shall hunger no more, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them." Lord, evermore give us this bread!

Break thou the Bread of Life,
  Dear Lord, to me;
As thou didst break the loaves
  Beside the sea.

Bless thou the truth, dear Lord,
  To me—to me—
As thou didst bless the Bread
  By Galilee.

UNDER PONTIUS PILATE

PRAYER

Eternal Father, in the Shadow of the Cross we worship and bow down, subdued by a mystery beyond our fathoming, and awed by a love greater than our hearts. When we think of Jesus we are melted by an unutterable tenderness, and the Shadow that waits for every man, from which none escape, no longer darkens our faith and obscures our hope. Something in Him, something in His life and death, lets a light into our darkness and a joy into our sorrow.

Humbly we pray for the valor of true faith, and the power of a loving spirit, that we may be little brothers of the heroic, all-enduring Christ. If He accepted His cross as a sacrament at Thy hand, let us not think that we are in the grasp of a blind Fate that knows not nor cares, but read our sorrows as the will of One who is shaping us for a holier ministry. When sorrow comes, may it teach us a truth deeper than joy can know, sanctifying us to Thee.

At the altar of prayer we yield our spirits to Thy spirit, to be touched to finer issues, to be taught of Thee in the truth as it is in Jesus, to be trained for Thy higher service. Make clean our hearts; unveil Thy love to us that in its clear shining we may see the meaning of life and serve Thee in faithfulness and joy. When we must pass, at last, from this shadow of life into the Shadow of Death, be Thou, O Lord, our light till the morning breaks. Amen.

UNDER PONTIUS PILATE

"And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him." Luke 23:24, 33.

I

HOW startling it is to find in the ancient formula of faith we are expounding so swift a flight from the Cradle to the Cross: "Born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried." No mention is made of the Life of Jesus, of his words of beauty, his works of mercy, his art of teaching, his joy in doing good. *"Born . . . Suffered;"* it reads like a litany of woe, gathering into two words the heartache and tragedy of the world. The direst pessimist could not ask for a more dismal picture of life, as if all the sorrow of the life of man were swept into one vast cloud. *Suffered!* the word stands out in terrifying clarity as an epitome of the life of Jesus. His gentleness, his gladness, his joy-giving gospel seem to be forgotten; but that is only seeming.

Herein the old formula is true to the Gospels. In every one of the Evangelists the Passion is central; its shadow falls over all the rest. Even on the Mount of Transfiguration the talk is of the

"exodus" which he must shortly accomplish. With grim steadfastness Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem, to meet his fate. Over all the later parables there broods a great Shadow, a suggestion of separation; we hear of a "far country," of a "great gulf," of a closed door where men are knocking, of a Son cast out of a vineyard and slain, of a cup of good fellowship refused, and a cup of forsakenness drained. As we draw near to the Cross, he is left more and more alone, for he is pressing on to regions never visited before by living man. For a moment he hesitates, and there is an hour of agony; but he goes on past our power to follow him even in thought, the while he promises to return, bidding his friends to be ready, with "loins girt up and lamps burning," for his coming. At last he finds his place among criminals, in bloody, muddy death, and takes a poor malefactor with him as he goes away.

After the Cross, the threads which had been broken one after another when he parted from those who would have kept him always, begin to gather up and unite again. The ghastly horror passed—its blind, brutal cruelty—and out of the Shadow he returned with an unshadowed joy upon his face, quieting all their fears, making them strong enough to stand alone. For a time his friends cowered in a room with shut doors for fear of the Jews; but after Pentecost—the crown of Easter—even prison walls could not hold them. A new impulse, a new hope, a new joy, like a Divine springtime, swept through the world, with a serenity which breathes upon us still.

It gave a new date to time, a new direction to the stream of mortal history, a new dimension to the faiths and hopes of humanity. It is not a mere fancy, it is a fact, the meaning and measure of which no man can estimate and no theory explain.

So, then, if we ask why the ancient formula of faith fixed upon the suffering and death of Jesus, to the apparent neglect of his life, the answer is not far to seek. The Cross was an apocalypse in which the spirit, purpose and meaning of his life stood revealed, and in its darkness—groping, staggering, but still following—the soul of man made a new discovery of God. It is all so horrible, so coarse, so pitifully grievous and afflicting, the torture of an innocent and lovely Being—the scourging, the mocking, the railing, the callous indifference, the little group of his stricken friends, the hideous glee of his enemies—until the mind shudders and recoils from the inhumanity of humanity. No one could have foretold that such a scene would become a sacrament of revelation and redemption. Yet that is what came to pass. Tragedy turned into theology; out of the blackest horror man has known shone the whitest light that has flashed in the darkness of this world; and the Cross, a sign of shame, has become a symbol of a "love that hath in its keeping unknown revelations." Who is sufficient for these things? What mind can grasp, what heart can fathom, the mystery of it all?

Evermore the dark Cross stands outside the city gate, silhouetted against the sky. It is the most

terrible scene in history, the most stark-naked act of injustice and cruelty the mind of man can conceive. The genius of tragedy can go no further. Yet that heart-breaking scene is the center of the highest religious faith, and the place for the healing of bruised and broken hearts. It does not explain evil and suffering; no one has done so, no one can do so. Instead, it makes us more sensitive to the appalling range and baffling mystery of suffering. Yet, somehow, in a way past finding out, except by actual contact and experience, *it gives man courage to face suffering, and the faith to conquer it.* Facing the worst it discovers the best, finding God where He seems to forsake us—finding that He is in our suffering, and that "the Cross is the Martyrdom of God in man." It lights up the heart of God; fatalism melts into Fatherhood—here our poor words falter, but our hearts are cleansed and quickened, and an awed stillness broods in us.

Plainly it is not true, as Nietzsche said, that faith is a "flight from reality," a narcotic to deaden the pain of life, a buffer against hard fact. Jesus refused to take an anodyne; he bared his soul to the raw horror of reality—facing, resolutely and without mitigation, the full poignancy of the human tragedy—but without despair. The President of the Immortals, as Hardy would say, finished with him, leaving him broken but not defeated, crushed but not conquered, still faithful to his faith, holding the gifts of the spirit in bleeding hands. The vision of Job is vindicated; the sorrows of Jeremiah are

sanctified; the highest faith in the world is won from the bitter facts which in others so often destroy all faith. The words of Jesus are justified: "Fear not, I have overcome the world," and they are actually true. Deep mystery is here, even the final mystery of faith and life, baffling our understanding but satisfying and sanctifying our hearts.

II

Who crucified Jesus? The late Lyman Abbott left a group of little essays, entitled *The Crucifiers,* in which he analyzed the influences that sent Jesus to his Cross, showing that they are still with us, crucifying him afresh in every age. The essays were suggested, he tells us, by a passage written by his father, who looked at motives of the actors, rather than their deeds, since we may be very similar to them in motive, albeit very different in environment and opportunity. As he goes on to study the story he brings out very plainly the characters of those concerned in it, emphasizing the aspects which similar characters would assume to-day. "If I am not very greatly deceived, Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot and even the Roman soldiers, have far more imitators and followers than we generally suppose, and that, too, within the very pale of the Christian Church."

Thus, instead of belonging to a time far gone and battles long ago, suddenly the Cross is set down amid the scenery of our own day. To-day, as truly

as in Judea, the ambitious ecclesiastic, the worldly-minded member of the church, the cowardly politician, and the callous profiteer are revealed as the Crucifiers of Jesus. Let us never forget that it was the Church of the people of his fathers which first passed sentence upon Jesus. To the leaders of the Church His ideas were subversive of the old sacrificial and ceremonial system, since he taught that God could be worshiped as well without the Temple as within, and foretold the destruction of the Temple at no distant day. Whoever seeks finds; whoever knocks, to him the door is opened—to the penitent publican no less than the proud Pharisee. He ignored the petty laws and rules of the priests, as if they had neither value nor validity. He was a spiritual heretic, a social revolutionary, who quietly but firmly brushed aside the network of ceremony by which the souls of men were fettered—setting men free, and making them glad about God.

So long as he taught his Gospel to the poor and outcast—the riff-raff of Galilee—the priestly aristocrats treated him with contempt. But when he entered Jerusalem, and boldly drove the money-changers out of the Temple, which he said had been made a den of thieves, they saw the danger and determined to make way with him. The doves sold for offerings were raised on a farm owned by the High Priest and his family, and the exorbitant rate of exchange for holy money to pay the Temple-tax fattened the priestly purse. When he attacked the revenues of the priestly caste they plotted his death.

Avarice is very cunning; it knows how to play upon the fears and passions of people for its own ends. Then, as now, sect was set over against sect in endless debate about matters of minor import, keeping people divided about things of no importance—so easily, alas, does the Church become an institution of irreligion, and a crucifier of Christ.

In that day, as always, the worldly-minded church member played into the hands of the ambitious churchman. So long as Jesus preached that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and might be set up any day, Judas followed him with enthusiasm, undoubting. Like the other disciples he expected to share in its honors and benefits, and perhaps sit upon a throne of power. When Jesus refused a proffered crown, Judas was perplexed; when he spoke of his death, Judas was dismayed. As the opposition grew, Judas faltered. He had no mind to go down with a sinking ship. Jesus watched the struggle in the soul of Judas with pity, knowing how it would end. The rebuke in the house of Mary and Martha was severe, and resentment turned to revenge. "Love accepts any rebuke; self-love submits to none." For a brief time the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into the city revived the hopes of Judas, but his dreams were soon dashed. Thereafter he only needed an opportunity to betray his Master, as many others of his kind have done since with far less remorse.

Pilate was a politician, true to his type in every age and land, making use of any tool at hand, and

putting his private interest first. He was not a bad man, much less a moral monster. He was not careless about his work; he heard the evidence patiently. Nor did he mean to be unjust. No, he was simply a politician who found himself in a difficult situation and was trying to avoid a decision. What occupied his mind was how to keep on good terms with the emperor at Rome, how to hold his office and retire in a few years without mishap, and enjoy a quiet old age. His patron friend at Rome had recently died, making his position precarious, so that he must all the more avoid giving offense to the touchy Jews, whom he despised as heartily as they despised him. He would have liked to see justice done to Jesus, whom he regarded as a gentle, harmless visionary; but he felt he could not take the risk of setting him free. "I have power to release you," he said to his prisoner. Officially he had. Morally he had frittered away that power. "If self the wavering balance shake, 'tis rarely right adjusted." Wanting to do right, but weakly submitting to wrong, he played politics with the life of Jesus, keeping his office but crucifying his Saviour!

Anatole France has a story about Pilate in a book called *Mother of Pearl,* a fine example of the irony of which he is master. It tells of a Roman gentleman who was in Jerusalem at the time of the trial of Jesus, but who did not stay until it was ended. There was much talk about the young Prophet, and he was interested. Often he had wondered how the case came out. Years later he saw

Pilate—an old man, broken and retired—at a watering-place, pushed in a wheel-chair by slaves. He ventured to speak to him, seeking to know the fate of the young Teacher. Pilate did not seem to comprehend, so the gentleman recalled every item he had heard, in his effort to refresh the mind of the former governor. But in vain. Pilate said at last: "I do not seem to recall the incident." The sting of the point is that the story might easily have been true.

Under the Cross upon which Jesus suffered through the long hours the soldiers cast lots for his seamless robe, gambling while he poured out his life. In all history there is nothing more heartless. Yet there have been many like those soldiers, unmoved by the most pitiful tragedy, save by what they could get out of it. In the Great War, when mothers gave their sons, wives their husbands, and men themselves, and the nation poured out its money in a passion of service, the profiteer thought only of his own greasy greed. He heard no call to service; he saw only a chance to get rich. He took it, coining the blood of men and the tears of women into gold. He was a vulture of the battlefield, the lowest, vilest, most heartless wretch of all that vast scene of blood and mud and misery. He got rich, but his wealth is blood money. He decks his wife with jewels, badges of dishonor and inhumanity. One would think he must sometimes feel a twinge of shame at having made a fortune in days when sons before their fathers died, and the

world seemed falling to pieces. More likely he prides himself on his opportunity, his skill, and his good luck.

III

There is no need to point the moral of the picture; it would be useless to those who do not see it. Such was the world by which Jesus was crucified, and the forces that put him to death are alive, alert and active to-day, as sleepless as they are cunning. The worldly-minded Christian betrays his Master with less grief than Judas, who did have the grace to hang himself, revealing some trace of nobility in the dignity of his despair. The Church still stones its prophets, blind to the day of its visitation. The cowardly politician still plays fast and loose with high truth, refusing to take sides, avoiding a decision, thinking of his own interest and ease and popularity. Still the callous profiteer plies his trade, fattening on the woes of men. It is all so human, so familiar, so depressing, and we may read it in the morning paper!

Nay, more; such is the world—blind, brutal, ungrateful, sinful—*for* which Jesus died; the world where God lives, where an all-enduring, all-believing Love is working its way through and up and out, lifting man slowly from the animal to the angel shape. When we are tempted to despair of the world, and to think it not worth serving—since it does not want what we seek to give—we must re-

member Jesus. Where the pessimist fails, he was victorious. Where the cynic sneers, he wept. He never lost hope, and he is the only one who has any hope for this bewildering medley of care and crime, this tangled tumult, we call the world. How dare we doubt the worth of a world for which Jesus died, revealing a Love that will not let go, will not tire or tarry, till the law of love rules in the hearts of men, and reigns in the Kingdom of Heaven here on this same dark earth where Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate!"

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL

PRAYER

Thou, O Lord, art our unfailing friend, our ever-present help, and our everlasting hope. Without Thee life is winter, lonely and bleak; when Thou art near it is summer, and the birds sing in our hearts. Together we seek Thee, as flowers seek the sun, drawn equally by the wonder of Thy grace and the weariness of our need. Not for things do we pray, but for a more vivid sense of Thyself, in whom our little lives find liberty, power, and a joy which the world cannot bestow.

Teach us that we are not many but one, united with Thee and with one another in one nature, one duty, one destiny. Show us that Thou art in the brightest heaven and in the darkest hell, and that when Love descends into Hell in order to share the sufferings of its imprisoned souls, or to set them free, it becomes heaven. Open our eyes that we may see the ladder of Thy love reaching from the depths to the heights, and Thy angels ascending and descending upon it.

Many are our needs, O Lord, but Thy mercies outnumber our necessities; and as Thou art loyal to us, following all our days with Thy loving-kindness, help us to be faithful to Thee. Make us messengers of Thy mercy, ministers of Thy truth, doers of good to our fellow souls in their struggle and sorrow. May this house of prayer be the gate of heaven to any who have fallen into a deep hell of sin, or despair, or bitterness of heart. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL

"He went and preached to the spirits in prison."
1 Peter 3: 19.

HOW like the Bible that a chapter which began with homely admonition to husband and wife should end with a vision of the Unseen World, as if to show us that its awful mysteries are ever at our door. The text is a dark saying the background of which we hardly realize, and the full import of which we have hardly attempted to fathom. It seems to mean that Jesus, while his body lay in the tomb, entered into the realm of the elder dead bearing tidings of pity and of hope. In the seventh canto of the *Inferno* Dante has lifted the veil from that strange, benign mission, and in his *Christ in Hades* Stephen Phillips has sought to interpret its meaning in a poem of ripe and grave beauty, in which solemn music is matched with majestic words. Yet it seems far off, alien to our thought, a dim faded picture of an obsolete mythology.

The reason why it seems remote and unreal is that Jesus has changed the spiritual geography of man, bringing life and immortality to light. If we study the text and its setting, as well as the idea behind it, perhaps it will show us the difference Jesus has made in our thought of the future life. With

the possible exception of a passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the present text and context are the sole foundation in Scripture for the august doctrine of the Descent of Christ into Hell. By an odd fatality of fact, as is now agreed, this passage is an error of translation, due to the blunder of some later scribe in dropping some repeated letters in the original. It is another example of a great doctrine resting upon an obviously wrong reading of a Bible passage, as we may see in the more correct version by Moffatt, in which it is shown to be an allusion to the Book of Enoch. As a matter of fact, it was not Jesus, but the patriarch Enoch who is said to have gone and preached to the spirits in prison, and the idea is applied to Jesus by inference. The Moffatt version is as follows:

"Christ himself died for sins, once for all, a just man for unjust men, that he might bring us near to God; in the flesh he was put to death, but he came to life in the Spirit. It was in the Spirit that Enoch also went and preached to the imprisoned spirits who had disobeyed at the time when God's patience held out during the construction of the Ark in the days of Noah."

What is true of the text is equally true of the Apostles' Creed, to which the dramatic phrase, "He descended into hell," was a late addition, not found in its earlier versions. An ancient writer named Rufinus tells us that even as late as the end of the fourth century the phrase was lacking in the formula which was the basis and direct source of the

Apostles' Creed. It seems to have appeared first in a local creed in northeast Italy, then made its way west into Spain, sent on these travels by a Bishop of Poictiers, called Venantius Fortunatus, until at length it established itself as a part of the Creed. The Creed of the Eastern Church does not contain the clause, or anything corresponding to it. The question now arises, How did this idea find its way into the New Testament, and why was it finally added to the historic Creed of the Church? The answer to the question is very interesting, and brings us to the point of the matter.

While it is true that the clause was a late addition to the Creed, the idea which it embodies is as old as the New Testament, and was common to all Christian believers. In order to understand this conception, we must recall the thought of the time respecting death and the place and fate of the departed, which requires us to look at a point of view very different from our own. Hell, in the thought of that age, had no such meaning as it has for us. It was not a place of torment, but a dim, shadowy realm somewhere beneath the earth, in which all the dead, good and bad alike, dwelt, called by the Greeks Hades, by the Hebrews Sheol. It was a vague, colorless, wistful world, in which the good enjoyed a pale, inactive felicity, and the evil were doomed to a dreary lassitude, a bleak and unhopeful regret. The whole idea was that the future life was less real and joyous than this life, a cave of shades, a grim, ghostly existence, bereft of light and

loveliness, as dingy and uninviting for the morally noble as for the ignoble. No wonder the heroes of Homer would rather be slaves on earth than kings in the land of the dead!

Such was the conception of the future life in the classic world, and the early Christians shared it. If it asks for some effort on our part to imagine such a conception, it is because Jesus has changed the spiritual scenery of mankind, lifting a dim lower world into light and loveliness. From the Cross he entered that dark underworld, a pilgrim in a shadowy land, and in thought and imagination his friends followed him. What he had done for them they believed he would do for the dwellers of the abyss—the glory of his life casting a great streamer of light into the old, dark, backward abysm of the grave! Apparently the idea of death as final moral doom, fixing fate forever, had no place in the thought of the early Church. For them Hades was not hopeless but unhopeful, and by a daring insight of faith they saw that it could not remain a dim and dismal realm after Jesus entered it. By faith they saw him make a triumphal entry into a world of shadows, taking captivity captive, unlocking the gates of the grave, and setting the soul of man free from the darkest of all fears!

Here is one of the noblest victories of Christian faith—if only the Church had kept it, what a different world we would have to-day! It sent a thrill of new, invincible joy through that hard old Roman world, a freshness as of morning, a gladness as of

happy waters released from the icy grip of winter to go singing to the sea. What wonder that the emancipated imagination of Christian believers luxuriated in the poetry of faith in which it was said that John the Baptist also went into the realm of the dead on an evangelistic visit, and that the apostles, when they died, fulfilled like missions of hope. He is blind who does not see behind such fantastic romances the throb of a new power, the thrill of a new joy, liberated among men. If we set these sacred fancies alongside the sad inevitableness found in the Old Testament, or the vagueness and uncertainty in all pagan writings, we begin to see what had happened. The attitude is different, the outlook is new, the tone one of triumph. There are many matters that seem to us important upon which Jesus did not touch, but the vital faiths of the heart, the facts essential to character, he dealt with in a revolutionary way—among them the conception of the future of the soul. After he lived men no longer thought of the place of the dead as a cave in the earth, but a City in the Sky!

What wonderful things we dig up when we seek the origin of these old familiar phrases of the Creed, so often repeated without knowing what they mean. The doctrine of the Descent of Christ was a dramatization of a profound, all-transfiguring experience, by which the whole geography of faith was altered. It is one of the most extraordinary transformations of which we have any record. To the early Christians the victory of Jesus over death was

so complete that all the dead seemed to rise with him, lifted by his power out of a dark nether world into a realm of light and hope. He abolished death, as the radio abolishes distance, by triumphing over it. The gates of Hades did not prevail against his Church. By the power of an endless life he held the keys of the grave, and set humanity at liberty. Our familiarity with his truth has blunted our sense of the absolutely amazing change which he wrought in the inner life of man, creating a faith which grasped the crumbling classic world and refashioned it.

Yet to the Church of our day, which so sorely needs the same emancipating power, the doctrine of the Descent of Christ is only a faded fiction of olden time, a pious fancy. Of course, if we change our conception of the condition of the departed, the picture of the Descent of Christ is also changed. But why do we so glibly forget how and by whom the change was accomplished, and the spiritual wonder of it! Three hundred years ago our fathers rephrased this clause of the Creed, adding a note as follows: "He descended into Hell; that is, he continued in the state of the dead, under the power of death, till the third day." What a heavy, horn-eyed literalism, as if the Lord of Life could be kept under the power of death! How prosaic, how wingless, how different in tone from the vivid, victorious thought of the early Church, to whom Jesus was never under the power of death, but triumphant over it! Truly, a great teacher was justified in writ-

ing an essay on "the lost radiance of religion!" If only the Church could recapture the mighty faith of its morning years, it would sweep all before it and reshape the tangled tumult of our day. One recalls the surprised exclamation of Jesus to his disciples in the storm: "How is it that ye have no faith?"

It will bring the matter to a sharp point if we ask a question: Has the doctrine of the Descent of Christ into Hell any reality or meaning to the mind of to-day? Or is it simply an old theological myth, empty of actuality? Let us rejoice that the pale, shadowy underworld of classic thought has vanished, and is no longer a dreaded reality. Jesus swept it away, bringing immortality to light—as a burst of sunlight through drab clouds reveals the beauty and color of the world. Let us also rejoice, with gratitude to God, that the red and blazing hell of a later theology is now a burnt-out, extinct volcano. What then? Has the doctrine of the Descent of Christ into Hell no meaning at all for us? Must we omit it from the Creed, as is now proposed, and say instead, "He triumphed in his death?" Far from it. To do so would be to rob our faith of a rich and deep poetry, so much needed in these prosaic, pedestrian days, when Christian thought is deleted of its wonder and diluted of its power.

Let us rather try to regain the flashing insight out of which the text and its context were written. Here is a deep and wonderful truth, if we have the vision to read it aright. Dimly, as we read, the

truth begins to dawn upon us, telling us that all souls, all ages, the living and those we call the dead, are united in a common life and lot, joined together in one destiny. The elder dead in the days of Noah are, somehow, united with us. We are not separate from one another; we are one. Humanity is a solidarity. Each age, each race, each life, is but a thread in the seamless robe of humanity. Our personality has no meaning apart from our fellows, in whose fellowship it finds fulfillment. To-day even the most unspiritual mind must begin to feel that humanity is not many, but one family, members of one body—tied together to the last man of us, forever. Together we rise, together we fall. The good of humanity as a whole does actually exist, and the injury of one is the hurt of all. Heaven for a few, hell for the many, has become an intolerable blasphemy. As Lincoln said, "It is either all or none." Even the men who lived and toiled and disobeyed and suffered in the days of Noah are not forgotten, not cast as rubbish in the void. They without us cannot be made perfect; we without them are incomplete—stones of a Temple yet unbuilt.

Neither are we separate from Christ, in whom the impulse to get to the center, to realize our oneness in God, found focus. As St. Paul said, Jew, Gentile, Greek, master, slave, male, female, all are one in Christ, who is the tie uniting all to all, a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, upon which the angels of God are ever ascending and descending. Jesus identified himself with humanity to the

uttermost, with all its suffering, striving, aspiring life. When we help our fellows in need, we help him. A cup of cool water given to a wayfarer slakes his thirst. An injury done to a little child is a blow upon his heart. Here is the great mysticism —the oneness of Christ with every human soul, however far wandering, however far fallen; his brightest heaven a ceaseless divine activity in the darkest haunts of hell. If any soul is in hell Christ is there too, and his labor is never done while any child of God writhes in agony or wanders in darkness, here or hereafter.

What and where is hell? Obviously it is more a spiritual condition than a geographical location: it is life without God in the service of self. As Amiel said, "Heaven, hell, the world, are within us; man is the great abyss." He does not mean that there is no heaven or hell outside of us. But he does mean that a man may have everything that heart can desire on the outside of life and yet be in hell. Heaven itself would be hell to a man who has a dark sin, or a dull despair, in his heart. No one ever ascends into heaven who is unwilling to descend into the hell of human need for the sake of lifting others out of it. There is no heaven at all which is not the trophy of love making war on hell, love descending into the dark welter of evil and anguish and lifting life to its own radiant level. No, it is not a pretty poetic fancy, but a downright spiritual fact, that the higher any one ascends in the Christ-life, the more fully does he give himself for

the removal of all fetters from his fellows, for the helping and delivering of those who are "fast bound in affliction and pain." Even Christ did not—could not!—ascend into heaven until he had descended into the uttermost depths; and the hope of the world is in that down-reaching love, as active in the world to-day as ever it was, guiding, suffering, striving, achieving in the vast and unwearied effort in behalf of the redemptive making of man.

Christ in Hell? What a conception—and yet that is where the Redeemer of man should be, because that is where he is most needed. In the days of his flesh he haunted the places of direst need, living with sinners, an outcast with the outcast, as if the only heaven he cared about was the heaven of a love that never spared itself in the endeavor to save the victims of suffering and sin. What he did then he does now, giving himself no less freely, no less really, to our poor, sinful, wandering humanity. Still, as of old, he is ascending in triumph over cruelty and sin; still descending in love into darkened human hearts and lives. By as much as we are willing to descend with him into hell in order to share the suffering of imprisoned souls, and to set them free, by so much are we his followers and helpers. Aye, our Christian faith is deeper than we have fathomed, and more wonderful than we have dreamed!

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

PRAYER

Eternal Father, by whose life we live, by whose spirit we have understanding, Thou art the answer to our prayer and the consolation of our hearts. So transfigure our minds that we may desire what Thou willest, and will what Thou commandest. If we ask for what has never found words, make us aware, by the warmth and astonishment of our hearts, that Thou knowest our need. Draw us to Thee and to each other, that each may share the light and fellowship of the truth.

Thou who hearest all, illumine our minds with the Spirit of Love, that we may know Thy truth and obey Thy will in this new and strange time. So long Thy love has led us, sure it still will lead us when old paths vanish and we enter into new lands. Lord of truth and purity, build us up in Thy own nature; give us a clearer vision and a wiser service of Thy creative good will. Teach us the glory of the loneliness that comes of following the highest we know and the noblest we can dream.

Waken our hearts with the wonder of Thy presence, that in joy or sorrow, in the sunny day or the dark night, we may live by faith, faithfully, in obedient trust. Thou who art unwearied, be rest unto our weariness, healing unto our sorrow, and light unto our darkness. Lord, we would hush the beating of our own hearts that we may hear the beating of Thy mighty heart in the storm and tumult of the world. Make us little brothers of Jesus, in His name, Amen.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

"The spirit of truth will guide you into all truth."
John 16:13.

FOR me there are five great festivals of the Christian Year, each bringing its own beauty and blessing. The Day of All Souls bids us remember compassionately, and with hope, all who have walked our human way, lightly or sadly, in all times—a vision of all humanity! The Day of All Saints makes our hearts beat faster, as we remember the brave and beautiful spirits, unknown and unsung, who have ascended from the moral battlefields of time. Christmas celebrates the revelation, the discovery of the life of God in humanity; and Easter unveils its triumphant vision of the Life Everlasting—the Eternal Life in time. How strange that the Day of Pentecost, the festival of the flaming heart, should have fallen into neglect!

For the Day of Pentecost, if not the birthday of the Church, was at least the day of its awakening, its transfiguration, its enduement, not with a doctrine, but with a dynamic. And nothing do we need more pathetically in our day than an outpouring of the Spirit which made the early Church so happy and heroic, a new visitation of the Power available by faith and prayer and unity. Power we have of

many kinds—power of machinery, of money, of equipment—but without the power that cometh from on high we falter and fail, torn between dismay and despair. Nothing can save the Church of to-day and make it equal to its task but the Spirit which created it in the beginning, and which has guided it through the ages. Perhaps the vast and restless mood that is now upon us was divinely intended to drive us back to God, the Holy Spirit—drive us back from all secondary methods and devices to the secret of consecration and conquest. Surely a divided Church ought to observe the Festival of Unity, the better to realize the will to fellowship in a distracted world!

The Spirit of Truth—how much we need such guidance amid the falsities, the stupidities, and what Dickens called "the leprosy of unreality," in the world of to-day! Truly we need a great doctrine of the Holy Spirit, not an ecclesiastical doctrine, but a vivid sense of the living God guiding the upheavals and overturnings of our agitated time. God is not the great *I Was,* but the great *I Am,* moving in the courses of to-day, working out His eternal purpose, no less than in days of old. Hardly less urgent is our need of a new sense of the creative Divine impulse in the life and labor of man, enduing the workman, the artist, the statesman and the prophet alike—such as we find all through the Bible where intellectual nobility and moral beauty are attributed to the inspiration of the spirit. Under the spell of this truth medieval Europe saw the

processions of the Guilds of artists and artisans to the cathedrals on the Day of Pentecost, giving thanks to God for the genius of man. Are we the better for the complete loss of this vision in modern industry? George Eliot has a noble passage in which she discerns the Spirit of God in all inventive ingenuity, all scientific search, all intellectual adventure, all artistic creation, as well as in beauty of character and nobility of conduct.

Gregory of Tours held that "the Holy Spirit is the God of the intellect more than of the heart"; and while that may be an exaggeration, it does emphasize a truth well-nigh lost in our day. Clear thinking is as much a fruit of the Spirit as right living, and it is permitted us to rejoice in the Spirit of Science—so austere, so single-hearted in its quest of reality, so disinterested in the service of the truth—as a revelation of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophecy, healing are named as fruits of the Spirit, along with love, joy, peace, kindness, temperance and goodness. Perhaps its teaching may be indicated in this manner.

First, the Holy Spirit is God immanent in man, making his heart "the habitation of God in the Spirit." The highest expression of mind and character is "the fruit of the Spirit," who strengthens us "with power through the spirit in the inward man," at once an inspiration and a consecration.

Second, the Holy Spirit is the perfecting Spirit, finishing the work begun in us, leading us, when we

yield to His power, from faith to faith. If we are true followers of Christ, we "live by" and "walk in" the Spirit—the path shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Third, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity. "One body, in one Spirit," is the prophecy of the New Testament; "many gifts, but one Spirit," unity of life in variety of expression; so that the early Church could say, what we cannot, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us."

Fourth, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the future, the "earnest," the "first fruits," the token and prophecy of an ever-present guide leading us from truth to truth. Though our little systems have their day and cease to be, we need not fear to go forward into new lands, following the way of the Spirit. Always there is truth ahead, into which the Spirit of Truth will lead us.

To-day the Church must trust itself to the reality and power and leadership of the Holy Spirit, humbly and heroically, if it is to find a way out of the confusion of our time. God speaks to us to-day, as of old, in the facts, forces, events, ideals and movements of our time: "He that hath ears let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." Not to hear in the "long-lived storm of great events" through which we are passing the voice of the Spirit teaching us the way of God in our troubled world, is to miss the living word of God. Can any one doubt that the impulse toward a world-community, asking us to organize the moral intelligence and practical

acumen of humanity and make an end of war, is the very breath of God moving upon the minds of men? The finer social feeling of to-day, the growth of pity and justice in the human heart, the more vivid sense of solidarity, are promptings of the Holy Spirit. The vast universe unveiled by science is the universe of God, its laws His habits, its forces His messengers, its goal His purpose. If natural law is inviolable, it is the inviolable will of God, and the order of things is the garment He is weaving on the roaring looms of time. Let us not quench the Spirit by yielding to faithless fear, much less turn back when the Spirit of the living God is seeking to lead us into the freedom of the truth.

The task of the Church of to-day is, first, to interpret the ancient faith in terms of the modern mind; and second, to apply the reality of religion to the facts of modern life. Manifestly, by the ancient faith we do not mean a set of dogmas simple and definite, and as lifeless as the multiplication table. No, "the faith once delivered" and often interpreted is rather an instinct to explore God, to learn the heights and depths of the Mind of Christ, to trace out His will for man and His purpose for the world. What is the modern mind to which the old faith must be interpreted anew? What produced it? What is its insight, outlook, and point of view? Why do men to-day think so differently from their fathers, as if they lived in a new world? Why has so much of the thinking of other times become obsolete, not refuted but forgotten, like a

dim memory of a previous state of existence? The modern mind is the fruit of the Holy Spirit moving among us and within us, leading us into new victories of truth. It had its origin in the union of four movements so profound that they were like tidal waves in the mind of man.

First, the movement of philosophy which upset the idea of an outside, absentee God, and revealed God in His universe working out His purpose of creative good-will. Instead of a world made like a watch, wound up and set going, with which God interferes here and there, the modern mind sees God as the life of the world, its soul, its rhythm, its reason for being, and all nature as the sacrament of His presence. For a few miracles, hard to grasp, it bids us behold a universe where all things depend upon the mystery of the Infinite will. All the great truths remain, but they are interpreted in a new light. The Incarnation, so far from being interpolation in history, is a revelation of the God who is in all history, and the Atonement an unveiling of the red law of sacrifice woven into the fabric of the world. It is a new setting for the old faith, showing us the realities of religion not only as forces of history, but as facts of the cosmic order. The old faith abides and grows—abides because it grows—deepened, broadened, enriched and exalted.

Second, the movement of historical research which overthrew the old external authorities and found the basis of faith, and its verification, in the life of God in the soul. "Jesus based everything on experience,"

said Matthew Arnold; and the modern mind follows his way, knowing that there is no hope save in the experience of the living God, and that in that experience there is nothing but hope. It means the rediscovery of the Church, not as an authority, but as a fellowship in the freedom and service of the Spirit of Truth. In the same way, the Bible is read in the context of history, as a monumental witness of the presence in man of the Holy Spirit. How did the Bible come to be what it is? How much of it is authentic history? How much of it is the accretion of the creative imagination of after times? These questions are asked, not to destroy, but to discover the ways of God, the better to read His will in the history of to-day. If the old Book has a new binding, it has also a new beauty. In lyric and epic power it still speaks with the accent of the Holy Spirit, and if God lives in us we know that He lives in the Bible, in whose pages "spirit with spirit may meet."

Third, the movement of science, the revelation of the reign of law as the organized will of God, and of the principle of evolution as the Divine way of working. There is no longer any doubt of the truth of evolution; all that is in debate is the method by which new forms of life are produced, whether suddenly by leaps or slowly by small variations. Nor does it matter, since it is as true to-day as it was in the days of Darwin that God is in the process, and it is for us to know His way and work with Him. If God is in the world—in all of it all the

time—gone is the old terror of Fate, and Chance, and Whim, and we may rely upon His law, rejoicing in the vision of Creative Evolution, in which He calls us to be partners and fellow-workers. Surely, if the Spirit of God is living in the unfolding of history, He speaks to us in Science, not only in the results of its researches, but in its humility, its veracity, its love of truth, no less than in its beneficent ministry to body, mind, and spirit.

Fourth, the social movement, the rise and triumph of democracy, the growth of a social conscience and imagination, the increasing sense of human solidarity, making us members one of another, so that the injury of one, however small, is the hurt and horror of all. This vision came as an impulse of the Holy Spirit following the industrial revolution in England, and Maurice, Kingsley and Ruskin were among its early prophets. When Maurice confessed the sins of his age as his own, identifying himself with his fellows in their struggles, their sorrows, and even their sins, he discovered a new depth in the mystery of the Cross. If we are troubled of heart to-day—unable to be happy while others are miserable under injustice, oppression and inhumanity—it is the Spirit of God stirring within us. For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, God has tied our humanity together—one in origin, duty, development and destiny. What God hath joined together, man cannot put asunder.

Where these four movements met and mingled

the modern mind had its birth; and it is simply impossible for it to think in terms of the times before. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. It means not only a new point of view, but a new mood, a new spirit, a new method of approach—old truths have a new setting and old worlds a new meaning. The discovery of the Holy Spirit as the indwelling, creative soul of the universe is an all-transfiguring truth, unveiling a world of opening vistas, cleansing fires, and baptizing dews. Life is no longer static, but dynamic. It moves to a new rhythm, in which old dualisms disappear, and the words of Jesus are suns and stars. The appeal to experience makes faith not a cistern, but a fountain. To-day we know that faith is not final; it is a dawn, a spring with infinite summers in its heart. Its passion is for reality, and in that quest it tests every affirmation, every negation, as it stands in the service of life. The vision of a universe in which love works by law, moving toward a "far-off Divine event," stirs the heart like a drum-beat, making history a book of hope, not a desert of despair. The new sense of human solidarity asks for a Gospel of Salvation, not the mere salvage of a few from a Divine wreck and failure. Thus in every way faith broadens, deepens, and grows, seeking the last vision and the final fact—and he that has a living faith will know that faith in new forms.

Such, in bare outline, is the insight and outlook of the modern mind, and it is no wonder that the intellectual world, the religious world, the industrial

world, are in agitation. It is inevitable, inescapable, prophetic, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of old: "Behold I make all things new." Nor is it strange that fearful souls ask, Whither is it all bound and who is its Leader? When old dogmas dissolve, is there any Guide on whom we may rely to keep the holy things of faith, and to control the happy issue of the life of man? Indeed, yes. God lives, and no precious thing will be lost, if we are heroic enough to follow the Spirit of Truth. But there is tragedy in all transition, as when a young man, trained in the old habits of thought, enters a university and finds himself in an inferno of uncertainty, torn by unsilenceable questions.

Wisdom, sympathy and tact are needed, if it is not to become a dreadful alternative between the faith of his fathers and the integrity of his own soul. Long ago Erasmus said, "By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance." An obdurate attitude here is fatal, since it will mean the loss to the Church of a generation of educated youth. Our duty is not to be orthodox but to be true; not to be liberal, but to be real. *Nor is there any real conflict between the last found fact of science and the old, deep pieties of the heart.* Such a dilemma simply does not exist, and my counsel to youth in its perplexity is after this manner:

Think of God in the light of the highest truth your mind can know and the purest ideal your heart

can dream; but learn to find Him everywhere, in your own soul, and in all the shapes which life and love and duty take.

Read the meaning of life as a quest and a conquest, in terms of freedom, fellowship and service; but live it nobly, erect and unafraid, seeking its true values, obeying the law written in the heart by the Lord of all Good Life.

Make your own creed out of the truth learned by living—make it broad enough to include the purest, freest Soul the earth has known, in whose friendship there is power—and be as tolerant of others as you are severe with your own soul.

The Spirit of Truth! What is the final beatitude for man, if it be not to live his life, or long or short, in the love of God, the service of man, and the quest and joy of the truth? Living, thinking, toiling in the fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit, humbly following where He leads, we have nothing to fear. The revolution of mind in our day is under His leadership, and it will mean a richer thought, a more satisfying sense of the love of God, and a wider activity in fraternal righteousness. Already we can read here a line and there a stanza in a new chapter in the history of faith, and we see that it is the eternal faith in new forms, evoking new visions, and leading to new enterprise.

The letter fails, the systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit overbrooding all,
Eternal Love remains.

AMEN

PRAYER

Eternal Father, Thou knowest what is in all our hearts—the questions that haunt betimes, the longings that make us pensive, the partings that leave us forlorn. Teach us the mighty truth that Thou livest in us and we in Thee, in whom there is no death, but only life forevermore. Make us aware that in the Shadow of Life there hides a Love greater than we can think or know, and that it hath in its keeping the loves and fellowships of our mortal years. May this vision abide in our hearts and grow, until the deep wounds of parting are healed in the assurance of reunion.

Since Thou hast given us this hope, purify us and make us worthy of its promise. Search us this day, O Lord; cleanse us of all that is unholy and untrue, that we may not be unworthy of those who live in Thy clearer presence. We do not ask to see what Thou hast veiled from us here below, but only that no stain of sin or shame may blur in us a hope which turns our sorrow into prayer. This must be in accord with Thy wise and holy will, whatever else Thy wisdom may hide from us for our greater good.

Lord, in Thy loving-kindness we trust, content to toil in the fields of time, awaiting the will of Him who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or dream. Unto Him be the praise of our obedience, and the thanksgiving of our love, until the morning dawns. In His name, Amen.

AMEN

"These things saith the Amen." Rev. 3:14.

SOME words gather meaning as they journey until at last they overflow and become symbols of things too deep for speech. The word Home did not mean much when it was first uttered; but it has become so rich and tender and full of beauty that, at the very sound of it, troops of memories rise up and call it blessed. What suggestions cling to it, what holy echoes it brings back from the days agone. To-day, by common consent, we assign it to poetry, as being unspeakable save in the rhythm and melody of song.

How much the word God meant when it was first spoken we do not know, but for us it gathers up into three letters the history of piety, the hauntings of the human heart in its highest aspirations. No other word has such far-reaching echoes, such exalted accent, such ineffable prophecy. When we come to the end of thought, and sit down on the edge of the infinite, all we can do is to utter that one unutterable name. No wonder St. Francis used to spend hours on his knees, asking for nothing, but just pouring out his heart in the word, "God, God, God!" All our human faith and hope are in that

word, and all the dreams lost on all the winds of the world.

So it is with the simple, tender, haunting word, Amen. At first only a sign of assent, chiefly in prayer, to the words of another, on the part either of an individual or of an assembly, it has come to stand as a gracious sentinel at the gateway of silence. When we have uttered all that we can utter, and our poor words seem like ripples on the bosom of the unspoken, somehow this familiar word gathers up all that is left—our dumb cries, our aching thoughts, our deepest longings—and bears them aloft to the God who hears and understands. In some strange way, we know not how, it speaks for us into the very ear of God those ineffable things for which we have no words in our stammering human speech.

This is especially so for those refined spirits for whom religion is something more than a dogma or a form, something more than a mere sentiment, like that great man of science who once told me that his religion was all summed up in the grand Amens of the church. It was so with Stevenson, that awe-struck child of Divine mysteries, among whose thoughts wonder sat enthroned, and whose life, as he has told us, was like a well-handled ship, because there stood at the helm "the unknown steersman whom we call God." Once, when he was returning from the hills, he passed a wayside chapel and heard the echo of a sweet Amen from within, where the white faces of men, women and little

children were bowed before the Unseen. He was a pilgrim in a strange land, but that Amen gave him a home feeling, and his soul knelt.

There is a passage in *Pendennis* which it has never been possible for me to read aloud. It is when Arthur returns, a gay and careless prodigal to his mother, and together they go away into a little bedroom to talk. Somehow, the veils fell away, and mother and son understood each other, and the sorrowful estrangement which his waywardness had wrought melted away. As they were talking the clock struck nine, and she reminded him how, when he was a little boy, she used to go up to his room at that hour to hear him say "Our Father." Once more the young man fell at her knees, and sobbed out the prayer which the Divine Tenderness uttered for us twenty ages ago. And as he spoke the last words of the supplication, the head of the mother fell down on that of her boy, the gray hair mingling with the brown, and her arms closed round him, and together they repeated the words, "forever and ever, Amen."

Evermore this stately word moves like a Presence in the midst of our mortal days. At the marriage altar it speaks its blessing as young love walks toward the bliss or sorrow of hidden years. It stands beside the cradle when we dedicate the little child to the holy life, mingling its kindly benediction with our vows; and at the grave side it utters its sad response to the shadowy Amen which death pronounces over our friends. When, in our turn, we

see the end of the road, and would make a last will and testament, disposing of our savings to those whom we love, the old legal phrase asks us to repeat after it: "In the name of God. Amen." And with us, as with Gerontius in his Dream, the last word we hear when the voices of earth grow faint and the silence of God covers us, is the Amen.

With what impressive variations this great word echoes through the music of the Bible. We hear it afar in "the forest of the Psalms," as chorus answers chorus antiphonally, where it is sometimes reduplicated for emphasis, and sometimes accompanied by a rubrical direction for use in public worship. As we follow it through "that moving melody which is life," a certain beautiful mystery gathers and grows about it, like a river that deepens as it flows. In the conversations of Jesus we find a peculiar and striking use of the word, albeit, hidden from us in the English version. His oft-repeated phrase, especially in the Gospel of John, if translated rightly, would read: "Amen, amen, I say unto you." Perhaps it was the impression made by this idiom that suggested the words of the text wherein, by a flash of insight, the word Amen has become the name for Christ.

Hear now what the Amen saith, so far as our broken words can tell it, leaving unutterable things to "the God of the Amen." To-night, in St. Peter's, in St. Paul's, in the Church of the Wisdom of God in Constantinople, in the country chapel, in the Quaker meeting-house, everywhere the world over

men are lifting up hands of prayer. Upon this earth nothing is more eloquent than a company bowed in the presence of the Unseen. It bespeaks more of what man is, whence he came, and whither he tends, than all the libraries record. Is religion only a romance, or is there a Reality answering to the profound, pathetic, unquenchable yearnings of the human heart? Why do we live, and has our mortal life an immortal meaning some day to be realized, when the night is gone? Is it to be well with us, and with our kind, who grope here in the dim country of this world, and vanish? To all this eager, earnest aspiration Christ is the Divine Amen, the answer of God to the prayer of humanity.

Never was the insight of St. Paul more luminous than in those great words in the second letter to the Corinthians: "For how many soever be the promises of God, in Christ is the Yes: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, to the glory of God through us." Write that text in your heart, and you will know that nothing is too good to be true, and that it does not lie within our power to dream a dream too fair for God to fulfill. Christ is the Divine Yes to all the high, haunting questions of faith and hope and love. This it was—the Divine Love which hovers over men as a holy dream, a flitting vision, and echoing voice—that Jesus incarnated in a form dross-drained and lovely, fulfilling the radiant intimations of the highest minds, and satisfying the God-lonesomeness of the race. To the weary, sorrowful world—troubled of heart, eat-

ing but still hungry, drinking but ever athirst—He came as the Revealer of God. He is "The Lost Chord" in the jangling music of the world, of whom we may say, as in the dear old poem we used to recite—wherein the singer was seated one day at the organ, weary and ill at ease, her fingers wandering idly over the noisy keys:

> I know not what I was playing,
> Or what I was dreaming then;
> But I struck one chord of music
> Like the sound of a great Amen.
>
> It flooded the crimson twilight
> Like the close of an angel's psalm,
> And it lay on my fevered spirit
> With the touch of an infinite calm.
>
> It quieted pain and sorrow,
> Like love overcoming strife;
> It seemed the harmonious echo
> From our discordant life.

If we have ever heard that Amen—deep, clear, haunting—we can never be dissatisfied again, nor can we be satisfied until we have heard it once more. A man can bear much—anything, perhaps—if he has the echo of that music in his heart. If, like Abt Vogler, he has once lived, even for a moment, in the house of melody, though silence resume her reign, he will be content to strike the common keys, and will not lose heart even when they sink to the minor chord. The Amen of God, the Divine

Yes to our yearnings—this it is that links all perplexed meanings, and helps us to see, however dimly, or through a glass darkly, that a wise and holy purpose is being fulfilled through all the tragedy of the world; and having this sure token, we do not ask to see the distant scene

> Enough that he heard it once:
> We shall hear it by and by.

But if the Amen is the Divine assent to our aspiration, it must also be our assent to His way and His will—assent to His commands, as when the people stood at the foot of the Mount of the Law in the wilderness; assent to His providence, even when a tender or terrible stroke bows us low. For that is the meaning of the word: So it is, so be it, so mote it be. He is a wise man, a brave man, who, baffled by the woes of life, can nevertheless accept them as a part of the will of God, and say Amen. It may choke him to say it, but it will heal his heart:

> All that Thou sendest me
> In mercy given.

It is not mere submission, but acceptance; not resignation, but reconciliation; and underneath it lies the faith—true, and wise, and worthy of God—that He never does nor suffers to be done, but that you would do or allow, could you but see the end and all events as well as He.

There are those who say, with Browning, that, since God is in His heaven, all is well with the world. That is true, in so far, but it is not the whole truth by many leagues. God is not only in His heaven, but in His earth—even in "the mud and scum of things"—but it is facile optimism to say, in face of the horrors of life, that all is well. Others, taking heavy toll of dark fact, feel, or fear, that all is ill. But there is a truer, wiser, nobler vision which, forgetting no black fact, sees through the shadow, and dares to affirm, not that all is well, nor yet that all is ill, but that *all shall be well "when God hath made the pile complete."* At last, when humanity sees the purpose of God from the beginning, and the "far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves," the final word of history will be an Amen!

> "I heard it all, I heard the whole
> Harmonious hymn of being roll
> Up through the chapel of my soul
> And at the altar die,
> And in the awful quiet then
> Myself I heard, Amen, Amen,
> Amen I heard me cry."

THE END

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